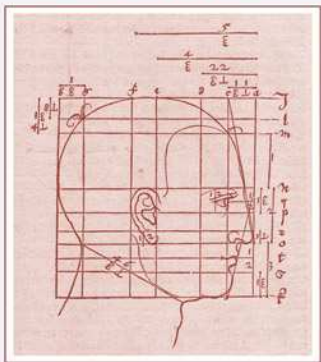


MIND AND MODALITY
STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF
PHILOSOPHY IN HONOUR OF
SIMO KNUUTILA



edited by

VESA HIRVONEN, TOIVO J. HOLOPAINEN
AND
MIIRA TUOMINEN

BRILL



Professor Simo Knuuttila in the Doctoral Promotion of the Faculty of
Theology, University of Helsinki, May 2005.
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Foreword

The main interests of Professor Simo Knuuttila can be gathered under two rather broad headings, mind and modality. It was modalities that first attracted his attention. In the early 1970s he belonged to a research group led by Professor Jaakko Hintikka, who at that time worked on Aristotle's theory of modalities. Knuuttila extended an analysis on similar lines further into the medieval period, and modalities have interested him ever since. His main work on this topic, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, was published in 1993. Mind as a theme recurring through the whole history of Western philosophy has interested Knuuttila since the early 1980s. His research belonged to a new wave of study that emerged at that time; it was then that the theories of emotions started to intrigue analytically oriented philosophers. Knuuttila's work on emotions culminates in his monograph *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (2004).

Throughout his career, Knuuttila's interest in the historical material has been motivated by a systematic interest in the philosophical questions as such. Quite recently, he has compared the history of philosophy to a laboratory where various philosophical ideas and theories can be developed over long periods of time. Through his own example, Knuuttila himself has inspired many students and scholars of younger generations, not limited to Finland, who want to understand philosophical problems to see how they were developed in that laboratory. As a Professor of Theological Ethics and the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Helsinki (since 1981) and from 1994 as a Research Professor of the Academy of Finland (now extended until 2009) Knuuttila has supervised an incomparable number of students on all levels of the Finnish system of higher education, the topics being mainly from the history of philosophy, the philosophy of religion, and ethics.

One aspect of Knuuttila's work which, in addition to its professional value, is of utmost cultural importance in the Finnish context is his involvement in various translation projects. He took part in translating Plato's dialogues already in the 1970s, but his role has been even more central in the project of translating Aristotle's works into Finnish. The last volume of the Aristotle series appeared very recently. He has also been active in numerous other translations of later philosophical and theological texts.

The present volume has been produced to honour Simo Knuuttila's sixtieth birthday, May 8, 2006. It reflects the wide scope of his research interests in many ways. The topics range from an analysis of pity and its moral significance in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* to the semantics of religious language from today's perspective, the time span being more than 2400 years. It is not only the scope and time range that is extensive in this collection: the approach also varies considerably from one contribution to another.

As an example we might choose, on the one hand, an edition of a thirteenth century sophisma trading on the claim that all human beings are necessarily animals and a discussion of various strands in the history of philosophical theology on the other.

The contributions are arranged more or less chronologically in this book, but it may be worthwhile to point out some thematic connections as well. Among the contributions related to the philosophy of mind, four focus on those movements of the mind that we call “emotions” or “passions” (Nussbaum, Charles, Alanen, Niiniluoto), often in relation to some aspects of cognition. There are also several contributions dealing with human intellectual capacity in general (Tuominen, Kukkonen) or some specific aspects of it, like intellectual virtues (Saarinen) or concept formation (Lagerlund). One group of contributions revolves around the question of what kind of relations mind has to itself (Emilsson, Yrjönsuuri; cf. Alanen) or to other minds (Olivetti). Imaginative capacity also receives some attention (Työrinoja, Kukkonen), and one contribution (Hirvonen) treats mental disorders—a theme which belongs to Knuuttila’s more recent interests.

The other main theme of the book, conceptions about modality, is directly addressed in three contributions (Normore, Kukkonen, Holopainen), and two more deal with modality in connection with the theory of science (Biard) or logic and semantics (Ebbesen). Logic and semantics hold a central place also in two contributions in which they are discussed in order to elucidate questions of the method of the history of philosophy (Hintikka) and of the philosophy of religion (Kirjavainen). Kirjavainen’s essay, as well as two other contributions (Sihvola, Dalferth), also focuses on philosophical approaches to religion.

All contributors have a personal relationship to Simo Knuuttila as his philosophical interlocutors. They are mainly his colleagues and students, but we are happy to have one of his teachers, Jaakko Hintikka, included as well. The group of contributors illustrates Knuuttila’s character as a person, who is always fascinated by problems that, as Aristotle puts it, are not important because they are useful for our every-day life but because thinking of them satisfies our desire to understand the world around us, gives us pleasure, and manifests the divine element in us. We editors offer this collection of articles to our teacher with warmth and gratitude.

There are many people whom we would like to thank. Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to all the contributors who, in spite of their numerous other commitments, have written for this volume. Secondly, we wish to thank the members of the editorial board, Professors Ilkka Niiniluoto, Risto Saarinen and Reijo Työrinoja (University of Helsinki), Professor Lilli Alanen (Uppsala University) and Juha Sihvola (University of Jyväskylä) for their guidance in laying out the contents of this volume. Gratitude is also expressed to the Department of Systematic Theology at the University of Helsinki, particularly the Head of the Department, Professor Jaana Hallamaa, and its secretary Hilikka Ranki, to Docent Heikki Mikkeli from the Renvall Institute, Do-

cent Marja-Liisa Kakkuri-Knuuttila from the Department of Philosophy and Helsinki School of Economics, and Doctor of Theology, Pekka Kärkkäinen. We are grateful to Margot Stout Whiting and Robert Whiting for language revision of selected contributions, and to Sirkka Havu for helping us find a cover illustration. Finally, we are grateful to Professor Arjo Vanderjagt for accepting this book in the Brill's Studies in Intellectual History series and the staff of Brill for their assistance in bringing this volume to completion.

The editors

PART I
ANCIENT THOUGHT

MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

The “Morality of Pity”: Sophocles’
Philoctetes and the European Stoics

It was precisely here that I saw the beginning of the end, the dead stop, a retrospective weariness, the will turning against life the tender and sorrowful signs of the ultimate illness: I understood the ever-spreading morality of pity that had seized even on philosophers and made them ill, as the sinister symptom of a European culture that had itself become sinister ...

—Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Preface, section 5

The savages in North America, we are told, assume upon all occasions the greatest indifference, and would think themselves degraded if they should ever appear in any respect to be overcome, either by love, or grief, or resentment. Their magnanimity and self-command, in this respect, are almost beyond the conception of Europeans ... When a savage is made prisoner of war, and receives, as is usual, the sentence of death from his conquerors, he bears it without expressing any emotion, and afterwards submits to the most dreadful torments, without ever bemoaning himself, or discovering any other passion but contempt of his enemies. When he is hung by the shoulders over a slow fire, he derides his tormentors ... After he has been scorched and burnt, and lacerated in all the most tender and sensible parts of his body for several hours together, he is often allowed, to prolong his misery, a short respite, and is taken down from the stake: he employs this interval in talking upon all indifferent subjects, inquires after the news of the country, and seems indifferent about nothing but his own situation.

—Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* V.2.9

1. *The Pity Debate*

Pity is problematic. The emotion that lies at the heart of ancient Greek tragedy has provoked intense debate, both in Greco-Roman antiquity and in modern Europe. Some modern philosophers, embracing the general ethos of the ancient Greek tragic poets, hold that pity is a valuable social emotion without which it will be difficult to establish decent political communities. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, devoting an entire book in *Emile* to pity and its social role, connects the emotion strongly to the very possibility of republican government, since it brings people together around the thought of their common weakness and vulnerability, in the process undermining hierarchies of title, rank, and wealth. Others, following Plato and the ancient Greek and Roman Stoics—

and adding some further arguments of their own—hold that pity saps the civic fabric and produces bad citizens, soft, sluggish, and effeminate.¹

Sophocles' *Philoctetes* is the pity play *par excellence*. If most extant fifth-century tragedies do indeed, as Aristotle claims, take the pitiable as their subject matter, showing heroic characters coming to grief in ways for which they are not (or not primarily) blameworthy, the *Philoctetes* appears to be constructed deliberately so as to highlight the prerequisites and workings of the emotion. As Stephen Halliwell puts it, it provides "a remarkable and revealing case of an individual tragedy whose very action comes to revolve around the operation of pity."² Pain, sickness, weakness, hunger, cold, isolation, unjust treatment—all these classical occasions for pity, recognized in Aristotle's analysis in the *Rhetoric* (II 8) turn up as features of Philoctetes' life on the island, and they are mentioned again and again. Their seriousness receives great emphasis, especially in the remarkable scene in which Philoctetes suffers a debilitating attack of pain, a scene that may be unique in Greek tragedy, usually so reticent in its onstage depiction of bodily suffering. Similarly emphasized are Philoctetes' blamelessness and the fact, again central to Aristotle's analysis, that any human being might suffer a similar calamity.³

Moreover, because we know in this case a good deal about both the epic background and the *Philoctetes* plays of Aeschylus and Euripides—both of which preceded Sophocles' in date of composition—we can appreciate how fully Sophocles set himself to explore the parameters and occasions of the emotion, accentuating the pitiable nature of Philoctetes' plight and omitting other distracting issues.⁴ Unlike his two predecessors, Sophocles chose to make Lemnos an uninhabited island: the Chorus consists of Greek sailors with the arriving expedition, rather than, as in the other plays, local inhabitants. He also, therefore, omits the local character, Actor, whom Euripides represents as providing Philoctetes with healing herbs for his pain. Philoctetes' suffering is thus doubled: to pain and illness is added the suffering of friendlessness and isolation. Sophocles is also the only one of the three who combines the persuading-Philoctetes plot (which involves Diomedes in the epic tradition, though Odysseus is substituted by Aeschylus, and Euripides includes both Odysseus and Diomedes) with the plot in

1 I discuss the Platonic critique of pity in Nussbaum (1992), with reference, as well, to the role of pity in Aristotle's *Poetics*; the Stoic critique is discussed in Nussbaum (1994b); the modern debate is analyzed in a general way in Nussbaum (2001), chs. 6 and 7. I analyze Nietzsche's debt to Stoic arguments in Nussbaum (1994a), and Adam Smith's fascinating contribution in Nussbaum (forthcoming).

2 Halliwell (2002) 208.

3 See ἀναξίου, *Rhet.* 1385b14, and "which he himself might expect to suffer, or someone he cares about."

4 Dio Chrysostom discusses the three *Philoctetes* plays in Discourse 52, giving detailed plot comparisons; in Discourse 59 he provides a more extensive paraphrase of the opening scene of Euripides' play. Aeschylus' play is early; Euripides' was composed in 431, Sophocles' in 409.

which Odysseus is charged with conveying Neoptolemus to Troy. By thus bringing Neoptolemus and Philoctetes together, Sophocles creates an opportunity for a young and impressionable person to be brought under the sway of pity. We are given a chance to see how the emotion might be connected to choice and action.

Europeans saw that the play was remarkable for its focus on pain and isolation, but on the whole it made them nervous. Adam Smith, praising the play’s atmosphere of “romantic wildness, which is so agreeable to the imagination,”⁵ nonetheless criticized its focus on physical suffering. Only two adaptations from the eighteenth century are mentioned, one by J.-B. Vivien de Chateaubrun in 1755, and one by J.F. de La Harpe in 1783. Lessing, who contemptuously describes Chateaubrun’s version in *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766), tells us that the French playwright not only softened Philoctetes’ suffering by omitting its divine causation, hence its inexorable character, but also provided a sentimental distraction from the themes of pain and isolation. He introduced two characters unknown in all versions of the myth, a princess who just happens to be living on the island, and her lady of honor.

All the admirable play with the bow he has left out and introduced in its stead the play of bright eyes. The heroic youth of France would in truth have made themselves very merry over a bow and arrows, whereas nothing is more serious to them than the displeasure of bright eyes.⁶

The drama revolves not around whether Philoctetes will be left alone without his bow, but around whether Neoptolemus will have to leave without the lovely princess. One French critic even proposed that the newly cheerful play be retitled, *La difficulté vaincue*.

Using Chateaubrun as a reference point, Lessing observes that the representation of extreme suffering is controversial in the dramaturgy of his times. Nobody—not even he, he says—is entirely comfortable with the idea that a person who shows that he is in great pain can be a tragic hero. Lessing does not entirely approve of his contemporaries’ aversion to displays of pain and weakness, although he owns that to some extent he shares them. We see here, he says, a great difference between ancient Greeks and modern Europeans. European norms forbid weeping and crying; Greek norms did not. What was important to the Greeks, he continues, was not to conceal suffering, but, rather, not to be distracted by suffering from proper action. Contrary to modern norms, he argues, Philoctetes can be a hero because he gives proof of firmness in the midst of suffering by sticking to his underlying views and commitments, in particular his love of his friends and his unwavering hatred of his enemies. Rejecting Cicero’s critique of the play for making its hero unmanly, Lessing says that it is proper, indeed, for the hero

5 Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 30.

6 Lessing, *Laocoon*, 25.

to show that he is human and vulnerable: unlike the gladiators in the Roman arena, Philoctetes is “neither effeminate nor callous.”⁷

Lessing’s defence of Philoctetes is not only (by its own account) an anomaly in the culture of eighteenth-century Europe; it is also quite limited, since Lessing maintains (implausibly) that Philoctetes is not influenced mentally by his pain and insists that he would not be heroic if suffering really did affect his personality. Apart from Lessing, the play found few admirers. Goethe gave it a brief nod of approval in the *Conversations with Eckermann*. On the whole, however, it remained one of the least performed and studied in the tragic canon until relatively recent times, and had relatively few modern versions until Seamus Heaney’s acclaimed *The Cure at Troy* (1990). It seems, then, worth examining the play in the light of the ancient Platonic-Stoic critique and its modern elaborations, to see whether it contains good answers to the problems that philosophical critics of pity have plausibly raised. Such an examination will I hope be a fitting contribution to a volume honoring Simo Knuutila, who has done so much throughout his remarkable career to promote a deeper understanding of the history of philosophical views regarding the emotions.

One note before we begin. In most of my writing on the emotion that the Greeks called ἔλεος and οἶκτος, I use English “compassion” as the translation, because in a modern context “pity” is frequently associated with condescension and superiority, as the Greek emotion, and Rousseau’s *pitié*, were not. Here, because I am planning to stick so close to the Greek terms and the text of the play, I use “pity,” as the word virtually always used to translate ἔλεος and οἶκτος into English; it is also, not surprisingly, the word standardly used to render Rousseau’s *pitié*. Readers should understand that I am talking about ἔλεος and οἶκτος, as Sophocles, and, with him, Aristotle understand them.

2. *Pity’s Elements*

According to Aristotle, whose account of ἔλεος in *Rhetoric* II 8 is both a valuable philosophical guide in its own right and an excellent summation of much that we observe in Greek tragedy, pity involves three characteristic thoughts: that a serious bad thing has happened to someone else; that it was not (or not primarily) that person’s own fault (the person is ἀναίτιος); and, third, that it is the sort of thing “that one might expect to suffer, either oneself or someone one cares about” (1385b14–15). Having devoted an entire chapter to these requirements in *Upheavals of Thought*,⁸ I shall not dwell on them at length here. The thought of seriousness and the thought of non-fault seem to me just right; the requirement of similar possibilities strikes me as a very usual

7 Lessing, *Laocoon*, 29.

8 Nussbaum (2001) ch. 6.

element in pity, but we should conclude that it is not absolutely necessary, since we pity nonhuman animals without imagining that they are similar in kind to us, and we imagine that a god with no needs pities human beings who are utterly different in kind.⁹

There is, however, another thought that needs to be added to these three in order to make the emotion complete. I call this thought the “eudaimonistic judgment,” meaning by this the thought that the person who is the object of pity is an important part of one’s own scheme of goals and ends, one’s conception of one’s own εὐδαιμονία. This does not mean that the person is seen as a mere instrument of personal ends: we love and benefit our friends and family members for their own sake. It does mean that the people who will be singled out for pity, as for other strong emotions, are those who are woven into the fabric of one’s own life, a part of our sense of what is most important in it. Distant people can be of eudaimonistic relevance in several ways: because the pitier has managed already to concern herself strongly with their well-being; because the pitier attaches eudaimonistic importance to general principles of justice according to which we have ethical duties to people at a distance; or because, during an episode of deliberation and/or imagination, the distant people *become* of strong concern to her, although they were not before.¹⁰

The occasions for pity that Aristotle enumerates read like a plot outline of Sophocles’ play. They fall into two groups: painful and destructive things, and bad things for which luck is responsible. (The rationale for the division might be that the first group might be deliberately inflicted by another person, and need not be caused by luck; if so, old age is misplaced, as are several items in the second group.) In the first group are: deaths, bodily damages (αἰχμαίαι), bodily afflictions (σωμαίων κακώσεις), old age, illnesses, lack of food. In the second group are: friendlessness; having few friends; being separated from one’s friends and relations; ugliness; weakness; deformity; getting something bad from a source from which you were expecting something good; having that happen many times; the coming of good after the worst has happened; that no good should befall someone at all, or that one should not be able to enjoy it when it does. *Philoctetes* has every item on this list excepting old age—including the more unusual ones (getting something bad from a source from which you expected something good, having the good come when it is too late to enjoy it). It is as if Aristotle, who clearly knew the play (since he refers to it in the *Nicomachean Ethics* discussion of ἀρχαῖα) used it as a template for his own discussion. In any case, from this list we can see the extent to which the play provides us with a map of pity and its occasions, as well as the underlying thoughts (seriousness, blamelessness, similarity) that enter into the structure of the emotion.

9 See Nussbaum (2001), ch. 6, where this point is developed at greater length.

10 See Nussbaum (2004), in reply to Deigh.

3. *Arguing against Pity*

The philosophical tradition makes many arguments against the value and appropriateness of pity. We may, however, focus on four, which introduce most of the salient issues. As we shall see, three of the four arguments can already be found in Plato and the Stoics; the fourth chimes in with themes in Stoic ethics, but it is pressed, as such, only in the modern period.

1. *Falsity: Pity Involves an Overestimation of the Importance of External Goods for People's Lives* Pity revolves around various types of pain and deprivation, attributing to them considerable significance for a person's flourishing. So the question immediately arises: Are these matters really important, or not? Nobody, and certainly not Aristotle, would wish to deny that some things for which we pity others are actually trivial, and not worthy of our intense concern. Slight to honor, insults, monetary losses—all these, Aristotle holds in his ethical writings, are frequently overvalued. It would consequently be right to criticize someone who asked for pity on account of such relatively trivial matters and to reprove the giver of pity. What is at issue, however, is whether the things that Aristotle lists as the major occasions for pity are worthy of such intense concern. Plato's *Republic* III tells us that the spectacle of Achilles weeping over the death of his friend ought to be stricken from the education of the young in the ideal city, because a good person simply does not think such a calamity very important, believing himself to be sufficient unto himself for well-being (387d–e). The Stoics famously develop this position much further, holding that none of life's calamities is properly seen as occasion for strong emotion. The Stoic who loses a child, a friend, or a city, or who is stricken with pain, will not get upset at these predicaments. Nor will he want the pity of another, which would insult him by wrongly implying that he depends on the gifts of fortune. (The Stoic doctrine of suicide is closely linked to this line of argument, because it assures us that a person can always find an escape from pain if it becomes too intense. Thus even in such severe cases there is no occasion for pity.) Both Plato and various Stoic writers associate behavior that rises above pain with manliness, weeping and moaning with effeminacy (e.g., *Republic* 388a).

In ancient Greece, these positions were contentious and, we might say, counter-cultural—although in the late years of the Roman Republic and the early Empire popular sentiments about misfortune and emotion seem much closer to Stoic norms, whether because of antecedent similarities or because of Stoic influence. In eighteenth century Europe, as Lessing observes, cultural norms have put the expression of strong emotion strictly off-limits for the respectable (non-effeminate) man. For some thinkers, who closely follow Stoic norms, the norm of self-command applies to the inner world as well as to outer displays; to others, somewhat more relaxed, it is all right to have the emotion, so long as one controls its outward expression. (This latter view need not

endorse the strong Stoic repudiation of the worth of externals.) One thing that is clear, however, from Lessing’s treatise and many other pieces of cultural evidence, is that the face distorted in pain was agreed to be ugly and deeply unheroic; even Lessing hastens to assure us that the Laocoon is admirable because Laocoon does not display such a face.

Adam Smith wrestles with these cultural norms, and with the Stoic texts that were his lifelong preoccupation, in a fascinating way. On the whole, he defends the Stoic position on external goods, holding, in consequence, that a good man will not think of life’s calamities as occasions for weeping, or for the pity of others. In the last edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, however, published shortly before his death in 1792, he argues that Stoicism goes too far when it urges us not to have pity for the sufferings of our friends and our family. By uprooting these sentiments, Stoicism undermines the bonds that hold families and communities together. In our own calamities, however, he insists, it is right both to behave like a Stoic and to try to have a truly Stoic inner life.¹¹ To weep at a calamity is effeminate. Here Smith speaks disparagingly of the French and the Italians. The Duc de Biron even disgraced himself by weeping on the scaffold.¹² Consider, by contrast, the sublime behavior of the Native American “savages,” who greet death with a mocking song and endure with equanimity all the most horrible tortures.¹³ The passage that I have cited as an epigraph shows the extent of the fascination these Stoic “savages” held for Smith, a lifelong hypochondriac and constant complainer. They exemplify a norm of manliness to which he is deeply drawn, possibly because it seems so difficult to attain in real life. The passage shows an odd melding of Smith’s readings about Native Americans with Stoicism: for the description of how the savages behave during the respite from pain is so close to Tacitus’ account of Seneca’s behavior during the slow progress of his suicide that it is difficult to think the two unconnected.¹⁴

Smith’s asymmetry thesis is a notable attempt to salvage pity while sticking to Stoic notions of proper manliness. It is not very successful; indeed, it seems quite incoherent. If life’s calamities are proper occasions for pity when they strike our friends and family, they are important when they strike us, and we would be right to ask for and accept pity in such circumstances. But Smith’s odd thesis is worth mentioning because many people hold it: going through life with dignity intact, for people who have encountered

11 I discuss all the relevant texts in Nussbaum (forthcoming).

12 Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 49.

13 Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 205–206.

14 Smith’s source for the Native Americans was apparently a work by Lafitau called *Moeurs des sauvages américains*, which depicted the torture scene with a grisly illustration, reproduced in Ross (1995); it is possible, then, that Smith, focusing on the visual representation, narrates it with language of his own, and thus Seneca manages to creep in.

great calamities (people with severe physical disabilities, for example) is often thought to require an extreme Stoical attitude toward one's own misfortunes, while a "softer" attitude is permitted toward the suffering of others.

2. *Pity Does No Good; It Is Useless Moaning and Groaning* This objection, pressed often by Nietzsche, is strongly suggested, at least, by the Platonic-Stoic critique. Seneca frequently insists that we do not need pity, or any other emotion, for proper conduct, conduct in accordance with duty. Emotion simply makes us soft and passive, less likely to act well.

3. *Pity Is Closely Linked to Revenge* A particularly fascinating objection, evident in Seneca but developed most explicitly by Nietzsche, focuses on the commitments to external goods that underlie all the major emotions. If you love one of these uncertain externals, then you are all set up for fear lest it be lost, for grief when it is lost, for pity when someone else loses such a thing through no fault of their own, for gratitude, when someone helps you get such a thing—and for anger, when someone else wilfully damages it. The posture of the pitier seems so nice, so helpful, so full of the milk of human kindness. Consider, however, that the person who pities another because he has lost his child (let's say) is acknowledging in that very emotion that children are really very important. How will this person react, if someone damages his own child? A culture of pity is in this way a culture of anger. Seneca knows what he is doing when he urges Nero to avoid the softness of pity, for it lies all too close to the troubling propensities to cruelty that the young man is already displaying. We can make the connection between pity and anger even more direct by thinking about the person who asks for pity: for that person is set up for anger directly, in the very intensity of his concern for the good things that life has taken from him.

4. *Pity Is Partial: It Favors the Close against the Distant* This objection is presaged in Stoicism, which urges an impartial concern for humanity as a whole, while depicting pity as focusing on incidents close to the self. Given the egalitarian concerns of eighteenth-century thinkers, however, it gets developed much more fully there, particularly by Smith. He introduces the famous example of an earthquake in China, which will be an object of pity to a "man of humanity" in Europe—*until* he has occasion to worry about something that is really important to him close to home.¹⁵ That worry might be trivial by comparison—the loss of his little finger, as compared to the deaths of "a hundred millions of his brethren." And yet it will extinguish all pity for the large but distant disaster: "he will snore with the more profound security over the ruin of

15 Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 136.

a hundred millions of his brethren, and the destruction of that immense multitude seems plainly an object less interesting to him, than this paltry misfortune of his own.” Life provides us with such examples every day.

My own analysis of pity explains this inconstancy in pity better, I believe, than Aristotle’s can. In my view, pity requires the thought that the object is among one’s most important goals and projects. Distant people can take on such importance through moral education—whether in themselves or through an intense commitment to social justice as an end. But life does not naturally lead people in the direction of such attachments to the distant. We begin, typically, with intense love of a small number of people, and it is only gradually—if at all—that we broaden our emotional lives. For this reason, the morality of pity seems likely to remain an uneven inconstant morality, given to momentary flickers of concern for the distant (who seem really important to us when we hear a vivid story of their plight),¹⁶ and to backsliding when our usual scheme of goals and ends, with ourselves and our loved ones (typically) at the center, reasserts itself.

Are these four objections good ones? Let us now turn to the play, to see whether it suggests some possible responses. I believe that it makes a creative and convincing response to the first and second objections; it does not fully respond to the third; and it suggests that the fourth is basically correct.

4. *What Sophocles Shows Us*

4.1. *Falsity*

No drama can precisely refute the Platonic-Stoic argument, because dramas are written about, and for, people who accept a certain conventional view of what is important in life, the very one that the Stoics are trying to dislodge. As Epictetus said (*Diss.* II.16.31), “[l]ook how tragedy comes about: when chance events befall fools.” The tragic hero is one such fool, and the pity-feeling audience is a large herd of similar fools. What would be required really to refute the Stoic picture would be a complete ethical theory, plus arguments convincingly showing it to be better than the Stoic view. We would need, as well, a meta-ethical account of the role of common beliefs and intuitions in ethical theory-construction, since most common ways of arguing against the Stoics would strike them as suspiciously in thrall to deformed social norms.

What the play does offer, however, is a vivid reminder of some “external goods” that seem very important, and a vivid demonstration of how thoroughly those “externals” affect the attempt to live well. If the good life consists in a wide range of actions

¹⁶ For experimental evidence on this point, see Batson (1991).

in accordance with virtue, it appears that it can be disrupted, as Philoctetes' life is disrupted, by isolation, hunger, and pain. Attention is constantly drawn to the way in which every single activity in which Philoctetes engages is mediated, and deformed, by pain. "He comes not with the sound of the pipe, like a shepherd pasturing his flock, but, I suppose, he stumbles under his necessity and cries out with a piercing shout" (212–216).¹⁷ "He would creep now here now there, wriggling along, like a child without the nurse he loves ... when the spirit-devouring misery (*δακέθυμος ἄτα*) abated" (701–706). If even basic physical movement is disrupted by pain and disability, then all activities are disrupted—especially when, in addition to pain, one also lives in isolation with nobody to care or tend, the other feature of Philoctetes' situation that is most frequently mentioned by the Chorus. The Stoic attempt to maintain that one can act appropriately under the pressures of chance encounters here a serious challenge.

A similar case is made for hunger, around which in many ways Philoctetes' entire life revolves. Left without any source of food, he has to spend his whole day arranging to stay alive, a struggle compounded, once again, by disability and isolation. Shelter too is a focus of pity. Odysseus initially describes Philoctetes' dwelling as cool and pleasant (16–19). When Neoptolemus finds it, however, it is rudimentary, just "some pressed leaves" and "a cup, made of a single block of wood, the work of a crude workman ... Look here!"¹⁸ Some rags feel warm to the touch, full of the heavy oozing stuff from his sore." (33–39) As for drink, he has to rely on "standing water" (716).

In a manner unparalleled in Greek tragedy, Sophocles shows us the texture of a life at the margins of life, reminding us of daily realities that many poor people experience. Stoics typically do not dwell on this sort of lack. When they talk about poverty, it is genteel poverty: for example Musonius Rufus the gentleman farmer feeling pleased that he has managed to avoid the temptations of the wicked city. Nietzsche, similarly, imagines the life of deprivation as something like the life he leads himself in a *pension* in Sils Maria. Solitude, rejection, simple food and drink, various illnesses—but not exposure to the elements, acute hunger, the absence of fresh water, the need to hunt and catch one's own food, disgusting smells coming from one's own body, severe physical disability affecting mobility itself—all this punctuated by attacks of blinding pain. It seems implausible to maintain that action, and efforts to act, are not severely disrupted by deprivation of this sort. But what is true of Philoctetes because of a rare accident is true, the audience knows, of many people around them, much of the time.

The Stoics take refuge in the control that each of us allegedly has over thought and effort in the inner world. Even on the rack, the sage can think well and attempt virtuous actions. It is here that the play makes its most creative contribution to ancient and modern debates, showing us the extent to which deprivation affects the mental

17 All translations from the play are my own.

18 ἰοῦ ἰοῦ probably signifies disgust.

life itself. First of all, we learn that Philoctetes has to think all the time of how he is going to get his food; the effort to survive is so difficult and so continual that it threatens to swallow up other thought. “Pitiable alike in his pain and his hunger, he has anxieties with no let-up” (185–187). Second, the Chorus sees that this effort is not a peaceful effort: it introduces emotions of agitation and confusion into the inner world. Philoctetes is “bewildered at each need as it arises” (174–175). His suffering is “spirit-devouring,” *δακέθυμος*. He is as helpless as a child without his nurse. Pain infantilizes. Pain and solitude together also make thinking crude. Philoctetes has not used language for years, and he knows that he is “grown savage,” *ἀπηγρωμένον* (226). And when pain comes in full force, as the remarkable central scene depicts, it comes perilously close to removing human thought and speech altogether. Philoctetes’ metrical cry *αραρραραι, ραρραραρραρραρραραι* (*ἀπαππαπαῖ, παπαππαππαππαππαππαῖ*) (746)—translated, typically, by an inarticulate shout—shows us the razor’s edge that separates human beings from other animals: for his cry retains meter and thus a semblance of human ordering, but it has lost syntax and morphology, the hallmarks of human language. Pain can make us less than fully human. The play thus disentangles extreme physical suffering from Smith’s romantic fantasy of the noble savage.

Most subtly of all, the play shows us the influence of pain on moral character. Lessing makes things far too easy when he says that Philoctetes remains firm in misfortune. Philoctetes does retain some marks of his former moral character, such as the capacity for friendship that won him Heracles’ loyalty. His sufferings, however, have embittered him and made him so suspicious of others that it takes a long time for him to trust Neoptolemus. He trusts him, indeed, only because Neoptolemus claims to be as hate-filled as Philoctetes is himself. And then, having trusted the young man, he is all set up for a disastrous reversal, when the plot to ensnare him comes to light. At this point, hatred and resentment take over completely. His refusal to leave the island to come to Troy to save others and be saved himself is viewed by the Chorus and Neoptolemus as excessive and inappropriate, a dwelling on past wrongs that is not right for a noble man. Neoptolemus, having had pity on him and having restored the bow, nonetheless makes a very trenchant criticism of the effect suffering has had on his moral character:

It is necessary for human beings to bear fortunes that are sent by the gods. But those who cling to sufferings of their own choosing, like you, would not rightly receive either sympathy or pity. You have grown wild. You will not take advice, and if someone counsels you, speaking with good will, you hate him and think him an enemy who means you harm. (1317–1323)

The audience fully understands that the Trojan War would have been lost, and most of the Greeks would have died, so far as Philoctetes is concerned: it takes the *deus ex machina* at the play’s end to restore the order of history.

In these ways, the play makes a strong case against the Stoics, and an even stronger case against Nietzsche, showing that external goods have value for things that the Stoics and Nietzsche themselves greatly value: effort of mind and will, the ability to form projects, and, most important of all, the ability to be a virtuous person, a good friend, and a good citizen. Even though its insistent harping on the importance of the externals that Philoctetes lacks might be dismissed as just assertion of a diseased cultural picture, these “arguments” cannot be dismissed; they cut to the heart of the Stoic critique itself.

4.2. *Pity Does No Good*

Is pity just useless self-indulgent moaning and groaning, with no connection to appropriate action? The entire play is a refutation of that contention. Neoptolemus is an easy prey for Odysseus’ arguments, because he is young and ambitious. Though basically a fine person, he is prepared to lie and cheat because it will bring victory to his side and glory to himself. What changes his course, returning him to the commitments on which he was apparently raised (to his nature, as he says), is the experience of pity. The play dramatizes this in many ways, not least by putting in Neoptolemus’ speeches terms indicative of the pain that he is feeling, in response to Philoctetes’ pain. “I have long been in pain” he says (*ἀλγῶ πάλαι*) “suffering at your misfortunes” (805–806). He describes his pity as a *δαινὸς οἴκτος* that “has fallen upon” him, thus as a powerful and uncomfortable force, not at all soft and effeminate (965). Once he even calls out with Philoctetes’ own inarticulate cry, *παπαῖ*, expressing the agony of his indecision: “*Papai*, what shall I do from this point on?” (895)

The first result of his pity, so far as action is concerned, is that indecision itself. Instead of pursuing the plot with his former zeal, he now simply says, “I am at a loss, and do not know what to say” (897). Closely linked to his confusion is self-disgust: “Everything is disgusting when one departs from one’s own nature and does things that do not fit it” (902–903). At this point he still tries to execute Odysseus’ plan. But his pity prevents him. He turns around and goes back to give Philoctetes the bow, saying, “I go to undo the wrong that I did before” (1224). He rejects his former lies and resolves to treat Philoctetes fairly, as an equal. He will attempt to persuade him to come to Troy to be healed, but he will not force him. There is no doubt that this change, around which the play’s entire action revolves, is the result of the experience of pity.

The play thus makes a powerful intervention in the debate between the Stoics and their critics. Seneca repeatedly insists that we can leave the soft emotions behind and still act appropriately; duty is sufficient. Nietzsche follows their line—adding that pity is useful only when it displaces the urge to commit suicide in favor of an urge to understand human misery as profoundly as possible. (He holds this good effect to be

rare, though occasionally seen in devotees of Eastern philosophy.¹⁹) Interestingly, Kant is not so sure. Although he follows the Stoic critique of pity in many ways, he does at one point urge people to go to sickrooms and prisons in order to inspire pity in themselves, since it might provide them with motives to right action that a contemplation of duty all by itself would not provide. Of course it would be better if people did act correctly without relying on emotion, but Kant is interested in getting the right things done for people, and thus prefers a motive that is in his eyes imperfect to no motive at all.²⁰

The play suggests that there is something about the sheer vividness of seeing another person's plight that powerfully contributes to forming emotions that motivate appropriate action. Modern empirical psychology agrees. In an elaborate series of experiments on the roots of altruistic behavior, psychologist C. Daniel Batson has shown that it is indeed largely true that hearing a vivid account of the story of another person's plight leads to pity/compassion, and that pity/compassion leads to helping action. In the typical scenario, subjects (students at the University of Kansas) listen to a story of woe that concerns a fellow student. Some are told to pay attention only to the technical aspects of the broadcast, not its content; others are told to listen to the content and to imagine the situation vividly to themselves. Subjects in the latter group, not the former, report experiencing compassion/pity. What is even more interesting is that in most cases the subjects typically choose helpful actions as a result. Batson is careful to make it clear what would be helpful, and to choose something that is not very burdensome (for example, driving a student with a broken leg to her classes for a week). In these circumstances, at least, pity is strong enough to make a difference. We can add that this is a stronger result than it appears, given that the people helped were utter strangers before the experiment, and thus not part of the person's own scheme of goals and ends. So the story of woe had not only to engender the three Aristotelian thoughts, it also had to move the person at least temporarily into the subject's circle of concern. Pity does make a difference.

4.3. *Pity and Revenge*

The play does not take issue with the profound Stoic insight that pity is linked to revenge. Indeed it shows us that the same attachments and commitments that lead Philoctetes to ask for (and receive) pity are also the basis for his vindictive anger against the commanders. Modern readers in particular may feel that, while anger is appropriate, his intense wish for ill to befall them is not. Whatever the difference between Greek and modern views, however, the play shows that Philoctetes goes to excess, even for a Greek, in his devotion to revenge. He threatens to wreck the whole course of history

19 See Nussbaum (1994a) 152 for references.

20 *Doctrine of Virtue*, Akad. P. 35, see discussion in Nussbaum (2001) 379–383.

by his bitter intransigence. When we reflect that the world is set right only by Heracles' intervention, we see how destructive revenge can be, for both self and other. There is no doubt that Philoctetes' vindictiveness is closely connected to his high valuation of externals—difficult though it would have been to be a thoroughgoing Stoic in the midst of such extreme deprivation and pain.

The play thus makes us think about the “moral luck” that may lead a good character into excess and deformity, given sufficiently bad experiences. It also asks us how much anger we want in human life, and whether anger can ever be prevented from going overboard. Philoctetes' anger is an intrinsic part of his sense of justice. Indeed, it seems difficult to imagine the demand for justice without anger at treatment such as befell him. More generally, if the lot of people who suffer hunger, disease, and pain is ever to be ameliorated, it probably will not be ameliorated without anger at the wrongful acts (the selfishness, the laziness) that inflict these insults on human dignity every day. Nonetheless, this anger is not entirely attractive, and it has its dangers. Thus the play, while not accepting the Stoic/Nietzschean critique, suggests that an important task for the morality of pity will be to place limits on anger and the desire for revenge. It may be helped, in so doing, by a Stoic sense of the equal worth of all human lives: for Philoctetes' excessive anger is surely bound up with his solipsism, with his sense that the fate of the army, of Neoptolemus, of history itself, matters not one whit beside the totally engrossing drama of his own wrong and pain.

4.4. *Partiality*

The problem vividly raised by Adam Smith is deeply rooted in the nature of the human emotions. They take up their stand where each of us is, inhabiting the perspective of our own most important goals and attachments. We feel emotions for our own family and not for other people's families, our own group and not another group.

The play shows us this tendency. Neoptolemus is preoccupied with his own success and that of the Greek army. Philoctetes initially figures in his life as a tool to effect his ends. He is not easily moved to pity: when the Chorus utters its first extended expression of pity for Philoctetes (169–179), it is with an implicit contrast to Neoptolemus' more detached formulations. “For my part, I pity him,” they say (οἰκτιρῶ νιν ἔγωγ'). They get a cold answer: all of this is the gods' plan, so that the war will not end before it ought to (191–200). It is only when Philoctetes has formed a trusting relationship with Neoptolemus and he has seen the pain with his own eyes that he feels pity—because it is only then that the man is real to him, as a human being whom he knows, a quasi-friend, part of his circle of concern. His moral imagination is stimulated by personal experience, up close: the smells, sounds, and sights of the attack of pain. Sophocles thus suggests that the problem of pity's partiality can be overcome, but only sporadically and unevenly, by ethical experiences that jump-start it by making a person a part of

one's scheme of goals and ends at the very same time as the other thoughts constitutive of the emotion are summoned up. We notice that no general ethical principles urging impartiality or concern for the distant are able to assist Neoptolemus here. For their advent we need to wait for Stoicism. Even with a good moral theory, human beings who are not Stoics will continue (and, I believe, rightly) to have special attachments to their own immediate context, their own loved ones. In that sense contemporary readers have not transcended the position of Neoptolemus, even though they will have reasons he does not for concern with strangers. The play thus vividly depicts a problem that lies at the heart of our ethical lives today, as we struggle to do justice to the claims of people we do not know.

Even to the extent to which the play shows the overcoming of partiality, it would seem that Philoctetes' heroic status, noble birth, and august destiny are all crucial to his being a focus of concern at all. If there were just some regular human being suffering away on Lemnos, wrongfully abandoned, nobody would be looking for him, nobody would be talking about him, and nobody would care. This problem is still with us as well, since the mass media typically focus on the sufferings of famous people. The media also have, however, a great potential for awakening compassion for poor and non-elite people, as coverage of natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the recent earthquake in Pakistan have shown us.

Why does the Chorus feel pity more readily than Neoptolemus does? And, since the Chorus is the emotional guide for the audience in this case, why does the audience feel pity when they hear the story of his life, even before they see the man himself? Perhaps these examples show greater possibilities for pity to overcome the partiality problem. To some extent, indeed, they do. The play shows us that when Neoptolemus' selfish emotions are absent and no particular distraction or impediment is present, human beings have a strong tendency to experience pity when they imagine another person's tale of woe. Sophocles and Daniel Batson are in harmony here. But there are strict limits to the Chorus's compassion. They singled this man out and imagined his tale of woe because he is a noted hero and they had heard his tale before. They attend to him as a person of importance—in a way that they do not, and would not, attend to many thousands of other suffering people. The play is not just Smithian (and Batsonian), showing us that the imagination is fickle and requires the vivid presence of the object of pity, and an absence of personal distraction, if it is to sustain its imagining. It goes further, suggesting that compassion is in league with hierarchies of heroism and birth. We weep for people whose exploits catch our attention, who are brought before us as fascinating. Such people, very often, will be kings rather than commoners, heroes rather than ordinary footsoldiers. Kings are fascinating and fun, even when they suffer; the ordinary soldier's suffering is boring.

Tragedy, in fact, is an aristocratic art-form. Throughout the centuries, people have wept at the predicaments of princes and princesses and refused a similar attention to

commoners. Could a commoner even be a tragic hero? That question, asked about Arthur Miller's Willie Loman (in *Death of a Salesman*) preoccupied the literary criticism of my youth. That it even had to be posed shows us a difficulty in tragic pity. So the play shows us not only what Smith showed, the fickleness and inconstancy of the tragic emotions, it implicitly shows us something more disturbing, of which no doubt Sophocles and his audience were not conscious, namely their inegalitarian and undemocratic character, when fostered by the tragic genre. As I have argued, these problems are still around today, though advances in ethical theory and the existence of media capable of vividly depicting suffering at a distance do make a positive contribution.

We are left with a political and educational challenge. Pity does seem to be both justified (in the central cases) and valuable, in prompting appropriate action. It is, however, fickle and in league with hierarchy. Could a society take advantage of the good in pity while cultivating it in an even-handed way? After all, the common objects of pity are indeed, as Rousseau argued, the common lot of all human beings. In that way the emotion itself gives us a head start. The task of cultivating a truly balanced and equal pity is a daunting one, one that we have not yet fulfilled and have barely attempted. If we are to perform it well, we will need works of literature that dignify the sufferings of common people who are not heroes, who did not enjoy the friendship of Heracles, and who do not possess a marvellous bow that everyone needs.

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DAVID CHARLES

Aristotle's Desire

Although Aristotle's discussion of desire in *De anima* III is important for understanding his account of action, it remains a relatively neglected topic. In this essay, I shall develop an interpretation of one aspect of his discussion, defend it against certain objections and comment briefly on its philosophical significance.¹

1. *De anima* III 7, 431a6–14

In *De anima* III 7, Aristotle provides a relatively extended treatment of desire. His discussion begins with the case of seeing something as pleasant. Here is a translation, which already involves some interpretative views.

(1) Perceiving is like saying alone or thinking.² (2) But when [the object perceived] is pleasant or painful, [the perceptual soul], as it were asserting and denying, pursues or avoids [the object]. (3) In fact, to be pleasurably and painfully affected is to be active in a way which involves the perceptual mean towards what is good and bad, as such. (4) Avoidance and pursuit are the same as this [viz. responding in the way specified] at least as far as the activity itself goes. (5) Nor are the capacities for pursuit and avoidance different either from each other or from the capacity for perception, although they can be described in different terms. (431a8–14)

The story (in outline) goes like this: if (a) the object [perceived] is pleasant, the perceiver (b) “as it were asserts something” and (c) pursues it. But we need to know how these three descriptions are related and what each signifies.

1 It is a pleasure to contribute this essay to a *Festschrift* honouring Simo Knuuttila from whose acute and wide-ranging work on modality and emotions so many of us have learned so much. An earlier version was read at a conference organised in U.C. Davis in October 2002. I am indebted to Victor Caston, Alan Code and John Cooper for their helpful comments.

2 “Saying” captures the idea of specifying something non-complex: an object or a feature of an object. “Asserting,” by contrast, involves a combination of, e.g., thoughts: see *Metaph.* 1051b24–25, *Int.* 17a17 ff., 16b27, *De anima* 432a10 ff. “Assertion” requires one to put it forward as true that some property belongs to some object. It is not enough merely to entertain this as a possibility.

Take (a) and (b). The object in question is the object perceived. This is what makes the perceptual capacity go from potentially being something to actually being something (431a4–5). When the soul is in the latter state, the soul perceives the object. The soul's perceiving the object as pleasant, we are told, is its "as it were asserting" something. It is natural to take what it "as it were asserts" as a complex proposition: this is pleasant. So, when the soul perceives something as pleasant, it "as it were asserts" that the object is pleasant.

Take (b) and (c). When the perceiver perceives the object as pleasant, his soul responds by pursuing it. But how is his response related to his perceiving the object as pleasant? Are these separate activities, one occurring after the other, or are they (in some way) more closely connected? If so, how? The next sentences give us some help.

Aristotle immediately introduces an account of what it is to be pleasurable or painfully affected by something. This is "to be active in a way involving the perceptual mean towards the good and bad, as such." While these phrases are far from clear, they are introduced to spell out what pursuit and avoidance are. For, in the next sentence (4), Aristotle adds that "pursuit and avoidance are the same (as this) [or are this] at least in activity."³ To pursue something (in the cases at issue) is to be active towards what is good (as such) in a way involving the perceptual mean. That is, as we know from sentence (3), to pursue something is to be pleasurable affected by it. To avoid something is to be active towards what is bad in a way involving the perceptual mean. This is what it is to be painfully affected by it. At this level of generality, pursuit and avoidance are the same: both are activities involving the perceptual mean towards the good and bad as such.

Aristotle now adds the following thought: the capacities for avoidance and pursuit are not different from one another, nor are these different from the capacity for perception, even though they are different in account. The first two are not different, it seems, in that they are realised in the same type of activity: one directed towards what is good or bad in a way which involves the perceptual mean. The capacity for perception, it appears, should be related to the capacities for avoidance and pursuit as they are related to one another. Each capacity is realised (in this case) in an activity involving the perceptual mean which is directed towards what is good or bad (as such).

3 In this reading I have followed Ross (1961) in reading *ταὐτό* and understood it to mean: the same. Thus, the sentence reads: "pursuit and avoidance are the same." But in what does their sameness (the sameness of these types) consist? Either this is completely unexplained (in this context) or it refers back to what has been said in the previous sentence: "activity with the perceptual mean ..." in the account of *ἡδεσθαι* and *λυπεῖσθαι*. Since the claim to identity requires some support (and this is given in the previous sentence with its reference to one type of activity which is common to taking pleasure and being pained), it is natural to take "pursuit and avoidance are the same" to be elliptical for "pursuit and avoidance are the same as the activity just mentioned." The same result could be achieved if one read *τοῦτο* in 431a12 and took this to refer to the activity just mentioned.

If so, there will be *one* type of activity which can be variously described as perceiving A as pleasant or painful, being pleurably or painfully affected by A and pursuing or avoiding A. In the positive case, perceiving the object as pleasant will be the same activity (type) as being pleurably affected by it and pursuing it. It is an activity in which one is attracted towards the object perceived in a way which involves being pleurably affected by it. Since pursuit is a form of desire, there is one activity in which one sees the object as pleasant, is pleurably affected by it and desires it.

Since the type of desire involved in this case is what Aristotle labels "sensual desire" (ἐπιθυμία), he is, it seems, committed to the following identity claims (concerning types of activity):

- (1) perceiving A as pleasant = being pleurably affected by A (in a way involving the perceptual mean)
- (2) being pleurably affected by A (in a way involving the perceptual mean) = sensually desiring A
- (3) perceiving A as pleasant = sensually desiring A

If this is correct, perceiving A as pleasant, being pleurably affected by A and desiring A are not distinct types of activity, instances of one occurring after instances of the other. Rather, there is just one type of activity which can be described in three different ways.

The three identity claims are, it seems to me, central for a proper understanding of Aristotle's account of sensual desire, pleasure and the perception of pleasure. In this essay, I shall begin by examining each of them in more detail.

2. De anima 431a6–30: Some More Details

2.1. Sentence 2: "As It Were Asserting"

The perceptual soul is common to animals without the capacity for reasoning, belief and practical thought (διάνοια). This presumably is why the perceptual soul (in contrast to the rational soul, 431a14) is described as "as it were" asserting that the object perceived is pleasant. It does not itself possess the intellectual resources required for proper assertion: thoughts (432a11–12), belief (δόξα), which is understood as involving (being open to) rational persuasion (428a20–21), or reason-based judgement. All that is required is that a particular object (perceptually) looks pleasant to the animal.

If this is correct, a subject can perceive an object as pleasant without being able to entertain the proposition (or quasi-proposition):

This looks pleasant.

For, if an animal is attracted to a given object on the basis of seeing its pleasant-feature, this will be enough for us to say that the object looks pleasant to the animal. There is no need to represent the animal as itself forming the complex proposition just stated. Of course, in other cases, perceiving an object as pleasant may involve the subject (a more complex one) in accepting (in its soul) the complex claim:

This looks pleasant.

But even here subjects can fall short of having a belief or making an assertion (in their soul) that this is how the object is. For they can accept this claim even when they do not believe (or think or judge) that the object in question *is* pleasant (see also *De anima* 428b2 ff.). If so, in their case too, the soul need not genuinely, but only “as it were,” assert a proposition when it desires something.

In the simplest cases, the animal to whom something looks pleasant need not believe that it looks good. Nor need the object even look good to it. For it may be aware of and respond to the *pleasant* feature of the object because its perceptual capacity is designed to respond to and pursue only that feature of the object. Its perceptual apparatus may be sensitive only to the pleasantness of the object. Of course, things may be arranged so that what is *pleasant* to the subject is also *good* for it (when all goes well). But this does not require that the object in question looks good to the animal.

There are, it appears, several distinct types of perception of pleasure:

- (1) Being aware of (and responding to) a pleasant feature of an object.
- (2) Accepting the complex claim: that [perceived] object looks pleasant (433b9).
- (3) Accepting the complex claim: that [perceived] object looks pleasant and good (see 433b9–10).
- (4) Accepting the complex claim: that [perceived] object is pleasant.
- (5) Accepting the complex claim: that [perceived] object is pleasant and good.

(1) is not an assertion as it does not contain the required complexity of judgement. It is an *as it were* assertion only in the sense that the subject is aware of a pleasant feature which belongs to an object and responds favourably to that feature and to the object which possesses it. (2) and (3) can also be classified as “as it were assertions” in contrast with the genuine assertions expressed by (4) and (5).

2.2. Sentence 3: *To Be Active with the Perceptual Mean*

What is involved in this? What is the perceptual mean? What is the type of activity involved?

2.2.1. The Perceptual Mean

Aristotle introduces talk of “perceptual mean” in *De anima* II 11 in discussing touch and employs it further in II 12. In II 11, the mean is said to (i) discriminate objects of perception (424a5–6) and (ii) to be incapable of perceiving objects as hot or as cold as it is (424a2–3). In the latter cases, their heat fails to cause the relevant change in the sense organ, fails to strike the sense organ in the appropriate way. There seems to be one activity which is essentially both psychological (discrimination) and physical (involving changes in heat induced by hot objects). The activity of the mean appears to be essentially a psycho-physical one. The relevant form of discrimination seems to involve some physical change although the latter is often characterised as the one required for discrimination. While these issues are complex and lie outside the scope of this essay, reference to the mean and its activity suggests that (like “the passions of the soul” discussed in *De anima* I 1) perceiving what is pleasant, desiring it and enjoying it are all essentially and inextricably psycho-physical processes.⁴

Aristotle returns to this topic in 431a17 ff.:

Just as the air makes the pupil of the eye be in such and such a state and then in turn it makes something else to have that state, and hearing does the same, the ultimate thing is [also] one thing and a single mean, but its being is different. (431a17–20)

His line of thought here is very condensed: perhaps he is only saying that as in the case of seeing there is one thing affected at each stage in the proceedings (and similarly for hearing), here too there is also one thing affected at the end of each of these chains and one mean (viz. the perceptual mean). That mean is the same for lines leading from each sense (even though it can be described in different ways as, for example, at the end of different lines). But, whatever the exact connection of thought between antecedent and consequent, the crucial idea is that there is only one object and only one mean (presumably the perceptual mean), the common end-point for all the relevant forms of perceptual input.

The last thought raises a problem:

If there is one object and one mean, how does the latter differentiate between what is sweet and what is hot (or the white and the sweet, 427a1 ff.)?

4 See, for instance, *De anima* 403b17–19. Desire (ἐπιθυμείν) is referred to in a similar way in 403a7.

For if white, sweet and hot are all registered on just one scale, how can it register all three types of information? Surely, it must lose its appreciation of the different sensory specific qualities, ones that would be registered on different perceptual scales. Aristotle's reply is as follows:

There is one thing which judges but in the manner of a limit, and these things [the judges] are one by analogy or numerically. They have the same relation to one another as [the sweet and the hot] have to one another. (431a21–23)

There seem to be two different ideas at work here:

- (1) Just as the sweet and the hot can both belong to one object (431a27) in the external world, so what discriminates the sweet and the hot is one object. [There is numerically one perceptual mean.]
- (2) The hot and the sweet may be seen as one by analogy as they occupy analogous positions on their own respective spectra.⁵ So what discriminates them can be seen as one by analogy as its different discriminators occupy analogous positions in the perceptual apparatus. [The perceptual mean is one by analogy.]

In (1), the perceptual mean is numerically one thing which can be affected in different ways by the hot and the sweet. It can tell the difference between the hot and the sweet because it is affected in different ways by them. In (2), the perceptual mean is the name for a number of different discriminators which occupy similar positions in the subject's perceptual apparatus. Here, the "perceptual mean" would pick out a number of different discriminators, one of which is geared to the hot, another to the sweet. There would be several scales of information which are one by analogy.⁶ The subject can tell the difference between the hot and the sweet because its perceptual apparatus is affected by the hot and the sweet in these distinct but analogous ways.

Aristotle does not seem concerned in the present passage to adjudicate between these options or (alternatively) spell out how they are consistent. Perhaps either would do for his immediate purposes.

- 5 For other examples of Aristotle's reliance on analogy in this area, see, e.g., 421a26, where smell and flavour are regarded as analogous to one another. The idea seems to be that a sweet taste and a sweet smell occupy analogous positions on their respective spectra (means).
- 6 Aristotle also suggests that as white (A) stands to black (B), so seeing white (C) stands to seeing black (D) (431a25ff.). But examination of this point lies outside the scope of the present paper.

2.2.2. The Perceptual Mean and Pleasure

Aristotle does not include the perception of what is pleasant among the phenomena described in the passage just discussed. But elsewhere he sketches an account of the perception of pleasure. Thus, in *De anima* III 2, 426b1ff. he speaks of certain pure phenomena (e.g. sweet) being pleasant when they are brought into the range of the relevant sense, but in the central cases more pleasure arises when the relevant ingredients are mixed or blended so that their harmony matches the *λόγος* or balance of the sense. These features are represented as pleasant because they bring the sense to its proper balance or maintain it in that state.⁷

If this interpretation is correct, the distinctive activity with the perceptual mean characteristic of seeing something as pleasant is one in which its appropriate *λόγος* (or balance) is maintained or restored. By contrast, to see something as painful is to move or be moved away from such a harmony (or balance). (If the perceptual mean is corrupted, one will not be able to see as pleasant what one formerly did. In extreme cases, one may not be able to register it as pleasant at all.) So understood, the two expressions “seeing something as pleasant” and “taking pleasure” will describe the same activity: one in which the appropriate *λόγος* of the perceptual mean is maintained or restored. When this happens, one will (in the same activity) both see the object as pleasant and take pleasure in it.

On this account, to see an object as pleasant essentially involves a distinctive activity of the perceptual mean: one which maintains or restores its proper harmony (or balance). This very activity is one which (in its nature) pleurably affects the subject. Its occurrence is his (or her) being pleurably affected by the object perceived. If to be pleurably affected by something is to be attracted to it (as to be painfully affected is to be repelled), the activity of the perceptual mean which constitutes seeing an object as pleasant will be the same activity as being pleurably affected by it and attracted by it. If so, we can understand why the relevant type of perception is one which in its nature involves a distinctive response on the part of the perceiver. For in seeing the object as pleasant, the perceiver is attracted to A. There is no defining what it is to see A as pleasant without mentioning this distinctive form of response to it.

It is perhaps important to note that this account does not commit Aristotle to analysing seeing something as pleasant solely in terms of responding to it in a given type. It could be (for all that has been said so far) that to see something as pleasant is also to register a certain (pleasant) balance that the object seen has (some feature about

7 For a sketch of a somewhat similar account, see also *De sensu* 442a15ff. and 444b3ff. It lies outside the scope of this essay to examine these passages in more detail.

the fittingness of its mixture). The present point is only that one cannot register that fittingness without being moved in a given way with regard to the perceptual mean. While no proper definition of what it is to see something as pleasant can be given without essentially involving the response of the perceptual mean, the latter need not constitute the whole account.

2.2.3. To Be Active Towards the Object? Is This Enough for Desire?

One concern about the interpretation just sketched might run as follows: surely simply being attracted to an object cannot be sufficient for desire? Isn't something more needed? Doesn't the desiring subject always "go after an object" by trying to get something not already in its possession?

In Aristotle's account, animals that only have the sense of touch have desires (434a1 ff.). Among these will be ones which, like sponges or molluscs, are incapable of self-movement. While they can perceive and be pleasurably or painfully affected (413b24) by objects, they lack the ability to move towards them. What does their desire consist in?

Sponges and molluscs can be attracted to what they have, be content with it and be less content when it is removed. This is because they like certain foods and dislike others even though they cannot move towards them. They can want the foods which they have and find them pleasurable. Pursuit in the case of these primitive animals consists solely in their attempt to retain something they have. For them, desire need not involve going after or trying to get an absent object.⁸

Nor is this phenomenon confined to the lower branches of the biological tree of life. In the upper reaches of the Aristotelian cosmos, stars, carried in their orbits by planets, share in $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ (*De caelo* II 12, 292a21, 292b1 ff.) and so presumably have desires. But since their course is set for them, they are not self-movers striving to obtain some further goal. Nonetheless, although they lack the ability to affect their course, they can be pleased with and attracted to how things are (their own movements and that of the heavenly bodies around them). They would be pained if things changed. In their case, pursuit consists solely in their wanting to retain something they already have. If so, they too can have desires without trying to go after or pursue on absent object.⁹

In sum: different types of subject can be attracted to objects in different ways. Some try to get something not already in their possession, others try simply to retain what they have. In Aristotle's picture, animals can pursue objects in many ways.

8 Sponges may perhaps have the perceptual *phantasia* ($\varphi\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$) that it would be pleasant to have A (or that some other state would be pleasant) but this does not lead them to act so as to try to get it (see 434a4–5).

9 For this reason, desire need not essentially involve the attempt to make the world fit what you want. For one can desire that things stay just as they always will (indeed must) be!

2.3. *To Be Active ... towards the Good and Bad as Such (431b10)*

What things are taken as good or bad as such? Presumably, the objects which are seen as pleasant or unpleasant. These are the objects in which one takes pleasure (when pleasurable affected) and towards which one is attracted: the objects to which one attends. In this passage Aristotle seems to focus on the objects (or features of objects) which are desired, not on the goods to be achieved: actions or states to be brought about.

What does "as such" add? This phrase directs attention from the objects themselves to those of their features which make them good and bad. But what are these? Is it, in the case of desire, their goodness or their being pleasant? In the present context the latter is, perhaps, the more plausible. To take pleasure is to be active in a way involving the perceptual mean towards something which is good in so far as it is pleasant. Since the "as such" clause points to the feature of the object which explains the nature of the relevant activity, the object's being pleasant seems the most obvious candidate. However, Aristotle does not spell out this point in any detail and further speculation is neither safe nor required.

3. *Philosophical Perspectives on Desire in De anima III 7*

The distinctive nature of Aristotle's account (as sketched in the previous section) emerges if one contrasts it with three alternative views of desire.

(A) The Cognitive Account: To Desire A = To See A as Having a Good Making Feature

In the case of sensual desire, to desire A is to see A as pleasant (e.g. as being harmonious etc.). Seeing A in this way involves judging that A has the relevant good making feature. The type of judgement is typically taken to be a belief.

But Aristotle, it seems, did not hold this type of account.

(1) On the cognitive account, to see that A has a good making feature involves the subject as judging, e.g.,

"A has a good making feature"

and so accepting a proposition about the object. But not all the cases of desire which Aristotle considers need involve propositional judgements at all. Consider the simplest cases of desire mentioned above.

(2) On the cognitive account, to see A as good (or pleasant) essentially involves a judgement about how A is: that it is pleasant. But, as we saw, desire (even when it

involves something proposition-like) need not involve judging that A is some given way. It can be based rather on how A looks to be. For, as was noted above, A can go on looking a given way even when one knows (and so is not inclined to judge) that it is not so.

(3) In Aristotle's account, one cannot specify what it is to perceive something as pleasant without reference to the internal impact the object has on the subject: how it affects the agent's perceptual mean. To perceive something as pleasant essentially involves the perceiver responding to it in certain ways. The relevant perceiving is not simply a cognitive appreciation of how things are; it essentially involves the subject's being pleasurably affected and attracted towards the object.

(B) Humean Account: To Desire A = to Be Attracted to A or to Have a Pro-Attitude towards A or to Be Disposed to Go for A

In this account of desire, the subject will see certain non-valuational features of the object and respond to them favourably. Perception is of these non-valuational features and causes a given response (desire) in the subject. To desire the object is to be favourably disposed towards it. So understood, desire is not itself a representational state. Aristotle's account is different in two important ways.

(1) In some cases of perceiving A as pleasant, it is necessary that the object be seen as pleasant (or at least look pleasant). The perception is not confined to registering non-valuational features of the object. Indeed, there can (in Aristotle's picture) be features of the object which one sees as pleasant (e.g., harmonies of varying kinds), even though one could not see them as pleasant without being disposed to react to them in a given way (with the perceptual mean).

(2) Aristotle is not, it appears, analysing the object's looking pleasant simply in terms of some non-representational response to the object in question. For, in his view, the relevant response (the activity involving the perceptual mean) in many cases essentially involves the object's looking pleasant to the subject. In all such cases, desiring A essentially involves attending to (or being aware of) the pleasantness of the object.

(C) Dual Component Theories: To Desire A = to Judge that A Is Pleasant (or Looks Pleasant) + Being Disposed to Go after It

For dual component theorists, judgement and desire are distinct and separate states, each of which can be defined without reference to the other. More precisely, (a) the relevant judgement can be defined without reference to the disposition to act (or react) in a given way and (b) the relevant disposition can be defined without reference to the judgement that A is (or looks) pleasant. Perceiving that A is pleasant

does not essentially involve being disposed to “go for” A, even if all such perceptions are followed (perhaps by natural necessity) by the disposition to act accordingly.¹⁰

On Aristotle's view, as presented here, to see A as pleasant essentially involves being attracted towards it. For seeing it as pleasant is the same activity as responding to it in a given way with the perceptual mean: the way which essentially involves taking pleasure in and being attracted towards the object. One cannot define what it is to see something as pleasant without reference to the fact that the subject is attracted towards that object. Nor can one characterise what it is to be attracted to the object (in the relevant way) without reference to the fact that one perceives it in a given way. There is just one activity which is essentially seeing A in a given way and being attracted towards it. Aristotle is not a dual component theorist of this type.¹¹

In the next section, I shall examine Aristotle's remarks about other forms of desire in *De anima* III 7 and III 10–11.

4. *The Dianoetic Soul*

4.1. *De anima* 431a14–16, b2–11

Aristotle continues his account of desire by considering the intellectual soul and its desires for the good. Thus, he writes a few lines below (431a14–16):

In the case of the intellect, images take the place of percepts, and when the soul asserts or denies that the thing is good or bad, it pursues or avoids.

If he maintains the analogy with the perceptually-based desire for pleasure, the two descriptions:

10 In some (distinctively Humean) versions of the dual component account, desire and perception are separate existences in a stronger sense: one can occur without the other.

11 This account has important implications for Aristotle's view of some of the emotions. Standardly, fear, for example, is understood in the following way: belief/imagination that A is unpleasant attended by pain and a subsequent desire to flee. In this account there are three separate components: a belief (or imagining) followed by two separate states (pain + a desire to flee). However, if the present interpretation is correct, there is an alternative: to see something painful will essentially involve being pained by it and being disposed to flee it. There will be one activity which essentially involves seeing the object and responding to it. There is no necessity to interpret “follows by” as pointing to distinct states where one happens before the other.

- (1) “the soul asserting that it is good,” and
- (2) “the soul pursuing it”

will both refer to the same type of activity, an activity in which one is drawn towards the object. For to have an intellectual desire for A will not merely be to register the fact that A has a good making feature but also to be active towards A. Indeed, one could not define what is involved in asserting that A is good without mentioning the fact that one is, in this way, attracted towards it. Nor could one define what is involved in the soul’s pursuit of A without reference to the fact that one judges A to be good. There will not be two separate occurrences: judging that A is good and being attracted to it (or pursuing it). Rather, both will be essential features of the same activity.

On a strict reading of the analogy, Aristotle would also characterise the way in which the agent is drawn to the object pursued in terms of his (or her) pleurably attending to it (e.g. finding the prospect of possessing it enjoyable or appealing). But since he does not mention any analogy with the perceptual mean, he does not seem to think in this way. Perhaps in some cases, when the object imagined is seen as pleasant, the subject may take pleasure in the prospect of having the object. But this need not happen in all cases.

Aristotle, nevertheless, seems to wish to maintain a fairly close analogy between the two cases since he points to only one salient difference between them: “for the thinking soul, images (*φαντάσματα*) take the place of percepts (*αἰσθήματα*)” (431a15). The percepts (*αἰσθήματα*), whose role the images (*φαντάσματα*) take, are the effects of perceptually presented objects on the subject: the effect that occurs when one sees, e.g., whiteness, sweetness or hotness (or perhaps this object). If so, one would predict that the images (*φαντάσματα*) would be the effects of non-perceptually presented objects such as the enemy (if approaching but not yet here, 431b6) or a drink (around the next bend). These may serve as inputs to complex propositions such as “A will be pleasant,” “it will be good to go for A,” “A will be worth having . . .,” the propositions which the subject asserts (i.e. when his, or her, intellect is engaged).

Aristotle spells out this picture later in the chapter (431b2–10). Here is a translation:

That which is capable of thought grasps the forms of objects in representations (*φαντάσματα*). It is affected [*κινεῖται*: moved in desire], when not perceiving but affected by representations, depending on how what is to be pursued is determined for him in the forms [taking *ἐκείνοις* to refer to the forms]. E.g., when you see with regard to a beacon that it is a fire, and see with your common sense that it is moving, you realise that it is the enemy. At other times, you calculate and plan, as if seeing, from the future to the present. And when you assert that there will be something pleasant or painful in the future, here and now you flee or pursue it. And so generally in the case of action. (431b2–10)

Here he is concerned with how that which is capable of thought (presumably, the thinking soul) grasps what is to be pursued and is affected by it (431b5, see b9). In the cases he considers, the object to be pursued is not present to the senses. Rather we realise what is to be pursued in grasping the forms of the objects involved. Aristotle gives two examples. In the first, the subject works from his present perception to grasp that the enemy is approaching. At this point, he grasps that the enemy is to be avoided (or pursued) and is moved to action (that is, desires) accordingly. In the second example, the subject begins with a non-perceptually presented object (e.g., a cold drink on a hot day) and works out what to do to obtain it. In this case, if she is attracted towards the cold drink, she will here and now desire it.

Aristotle generalises from these examples, which involve pleasure and pain, to all cases involving what is good or bad for the subject. In many, the resulting actions will be based on one's understanding that the enemy is to be resisted (or avoided or appeased) or that objects of such and such a type are worth going for. Here what is determined as worth going for (or avoiding) depends on one's thoughts about the enemy and other matters. Aristotle's claim is that the way one is moved (that is, desires) reflects the way in which one thinks of the objects (or courses of action) involved. As in 431a15–16, if one thinks that a given object is good or will be pleasant, one is moved accordingly. If the analogy with perception of a present object is maintained, in judging (now) that the object is good or will be pleasant one will therein be attracted to it (and desire it).

Is Aristotle taking the analogy between perceptual and intellectual soul in the way just suggested? Perhaps, in the case of the intellectual soul, there are two (definitionally) separate states: judging that A is worth pursuing and going for A (desiring A). Perhaps, with regard to the intellectual soul, Aristotle accepts some form of dual component thesis. *De anima* III 10 gives us reason to doubt this.

4.2. *De anima* 433a15–25

Aristotle begins by examining the suggestion that desire and practical intellect can both move us to act (433a14–16). According to this hypothesis, while desire and practical intellect both begin with a desired object, in some cases desire causes action and in others practical intellect (or imagination) (433a18–22). In this account, explanations of action in terms of intellect and desire will share a common form. Both would begin with the object desired and action would result from either desire or intellect grasping that object and triggering action.

Aristotle, however, emphatically rejects this hypothesis in 433a22–25:

As things are intellect does not move without desire (for wish is a form of desire and when one moves in accordance with intellect one moves in accordance with rational desire) ...

Why take this line? Why cannot the practical intellect grasp that something is good (and desired) and then take over and produce action? Why is it that “when we are moved in accordance with intellect, we are moved in accordance with rational desire” (433a23–25). Intellect and rational desire, it seems, play the same role in the account of action. Both start with a grasp on the goal, work out how to implement it and lead to the relevant action. The intellect is guided in its reasoning, judgements and subsequent action by the desirability of the goal in the same way as rational desire is. We can see why this is so if we understand the analogy between the perceptual and intellectual soul in the way already suggested: the intellect grasps that something is good and is therein attracted to it. There is one activity which can be described both as the operation of practical intellect and of rational desire. So understood, desire is not an independent component present before practical intellect has done its work. It is rather something present throughout the time when practical intellect is actively sensitive to the desirability of the object.¹²

Let us try to make this thought more precise. Practical intellect begins by grasping the object of desire as good (or desirable), finds ways to achieve it and leads to action. Rational desire is present throughout this process because the practical intellect is sensitive to the desirability of the object and (derivatively) of the ways to achieve it. To be sensitive in this way is to be attracted to the object desired and to the means required to achieve it. This is why practical intellect and rational desire can both play precisely the same role in the explanation of action. The expressions “practical intellect” and “rational desire” describe the same phenomenon.¹³

Aristotle is concerned to emphasise the presence of desire in the operation of practical intellect as part of his defence of his claim that there is one shared type of mover in all cases of action: that which is capable of desire (τὸ ὀρεκτικόν, 433b11). For desire is present both when sensual desire and rational intellect (so understood) are active. This

12 Nor is rational desire present if the agent thinks rationally and takes the further rational step of desiring in line with rational thought. For that would not explain the presence of rational desire from the beginning to the end of the process. Nor would it explain why when one is apt to move in accordance with rational thought one is apt to move in accordance with rational desire (*De anima* 433a23–25). For it would not rule out the possibility of rational thought pushing in one direction without any support from rational desire.

13 In *De motu an.* 701a31–32 Aristotle remarks “the activity of desire takes the place of questioning (in dialectical reasoning) or knowledge (in demonstrative reasoning).” The desire that takes the place of knowledge (in theoretical matters) accepts “Let me drink this!” and generates action. One could equally describe what happens here in terms of the activity of the practical intellect moving from premises to conclusion and action. There is, it seems, one activity which can be described either as that of rational desire or of practical intellect. For some discussion of this topic, see Charles (1984) 88–90. Much more needs to be said at this point.

is why desire opposes desire when the intellect (in creatures with a sense of time) and sensual desire conflict (433b5–10). For the practical intellect essentially involves desire (in the ways just specified). It cannot be correctly described simply in terms of belief or thought. In this way Aristotle corrects the suggestion countenanced in the previous chapter (433a1–8) that such conflicts are between desire and reason. There must be, in his account, more to the practical operation of reason than the purely cognitive judgement that something is good.¹⁴

There are, despite these similarities, some important differences between the operation of the practical intellect (or rational desire) and that of sensual desire. Thus, in *De anima* 434a5–21, Aristotle contrasts what is involved in the two cases as follows:

- (1) The rational imagination (involved in practical reason) is able to compare different objects (absent and present) and is not confined merely to considering one object with its varying perceptual features. In this way, the intellectual soul goes well beyond perception. (434a9–10)
- (2) Non-rational animals seem to lack opinion (δόξα) because they lack the type of imagination which is based on reasoning (where the latter either is or requires opinion) (434a10–11). Since animals lack this type of reasoning-based imagination but have desire, the presence of desire cannot require the capacity for deliberation (434a11–12).

However, despite these differences, all cases of desire involve the capacity to grasp and be attracted by what is good (or what looks good). While this capacity can take different forms in, e.g., beings of different complexity, there remains one general description which covers all the relevant cases. This can be true even when there is no one thing which is the same in all such cases. Indeed, for this reason, talk of the same part being present in all cases of desire seems inappropriate.¹⁵

¹⁴ If so, here too, the rational desire to do A must involve more than merely the cognitive judgement that A has a good feature. One also has to be attracted to it. (See, for a graphic description of this, *Metaphysics* 1072b3: the good is loved (ἐρώμενον) and thus leads to action.) In *De anima* 433b5–12, Aristotle emphasises the similarities between sensual and rational desire. His aim is to maintain the unity in form of the capacity for desire in these two cases. He would have failed in this project had he sought to combine a dual component (or purely cognitive) view of intellectual desire with his account of sensual pleasure in *De anima* III 7 (as interpreted above).

¹⁵ In an important recent article, Jennifer Whiting (2002) has suggested that: (A) Aristotle takes the capacity for locomotion to be constituted by the capacities for desire, perception and imagination working together (p. 143).

(B) Aristotle takes the capacities for perception, desire, imagination to form one sin-

5. *The Significance of this Account of Desire for a
Proper Understanding of the Ethics: Three Examples*

One can achieve a deeper understanding of several problematic remarks in the Ethics on the supposition that Aristotle held the account of desire just sketched. I shall mention three.

5.1. *Preferential Choice: Προαίρεσις*

Aristotle describes preferential choice as “either desiderative intellect (νοῦς) or intellectual desire” (1139b4–5). On the present account, preferential choice can be understood either as a form of cognition (albeit of the distinctive desiderative form) or as a form of desire, which involves cognition as to what is best to do. It is neither pure cognition (because of its connections with attraction) nor simple (pleasure-based) desire (because it is rationally sensitive to the good). Rather, it is best understood either as a distinctive form of desire (one that essentially involves rationally grasping the goodness of a given course) or as a distinctive form of cognition (one that essentially involves being attracted to the goodness grasped). For, properly speaking, it is a distinctive type of psychological state, irreducible to other forms of desire or cognition (or compounds of the two).

This account of preferential choice explains why Aristotle (in *Eth. Nic./Eth. Eud.* VII 10, 1152a13–16) can describe the weak acrates’s failure in preferential choice as being like a failure in cognition. For it is a failure in that distinctive form of cognition which essentially involves being rationally attracted towards the good. The two expressions, “failure in desire” and “failure in cognition,” turn out to be two ways of describing the same phenomenon.¹⁶

gle, functionally integrated *part* of the soul with two aspects: one representational, one behavioural which are inseparable from each other (p. 142).

The interpretation I have offered here is not committed to either (A) or (B) for two reasons: (1) It leaves open the possibility that the practical intellect can be responsible for locomotion without itself being a form of perception or imagination. Thus, it allows that there may be desires grounded in reason that lead to action without involving perception or imagination. (See, for instance *Eth. Nic./Eth. Eud.* 1149a35 where reason and perception are contrasted.) (2) It does not require that there be one common part (object) which leads to behaviour in all cases. Indeed, it may be that talk of “parts” is taken by Aristotle as (in some way) mistaken. That said, I agree with Whiting that (in cases involving the perceptual soul) perceiving A as pleasant and desiring A are inseparable in definition. Indeed, in my account, Aristotle not only defines (sensually) desiring A by reference to perceiving A as pleasant. He also defines the latter by reference to the former.

¹⁶ I have developed this line of interpretation in more detail in Charles (forthcoming).

5.2. *Rational Wish: Βούλησις*

In *Eth. Nic./Eth. Eud.* VI Aristotle speaks of the practically wise person's grasp of the goal as an apprehension (ὑπόληψις, 1142b31–33), as something which involves his (or her) seeing the goodness of a given course of action (1144a29–34). But, elsewhere, he talks of rational wish (βούλησις) as being for the goal (*Eth. Nic.* 1111b26–27). How are these claims consistent?

There has been a lengthy debate on this question. Some scholars claim that Aristotle's practically wise form their goals by purely intellectual means and then (if all goes well) proceed to desire them. Others suggest that the reverse is true: the practically wise begin by having good desires and then intellectually register the values their desires enshrine ("they read their values off their desires").¹⁷ However, if the present proposal is correct, neither of these views (themselves reflections of the intellectualist or two component view of desire) is required. For the phrases "intellectual grasp on the goal" and "rational wish" can both describe the very same activity (type), one in which the subject is rationally attracted by the goodness of a given course of action. This activity, like preferential choice, can equally be described as a form of cognition (of a distinctive desire-involving type) or as a form of desire (albeit one which essentially involves rational sensitivity to the good). However, strictly speaking, it is neither (nor yet a compound of the two). It is rather a distinctive *sui generis* type of activity, in which one is rationally attracted to the goodness of a given goal.

There is a further point: when people grasp a goal in this way, they will be drawn to (or attracted to) acting in a given way. But if they are attracted by counter pleasures or find doing what is best unpleasant, they will not be appropriately attracted to acting as they previously saw best. Indeed, this form of attraction is vulnerable to the operation of pleasure and pain in a way in which purely cognitive judgments are not. Pleasure can affect the perceiver so as to make him no longer attracted to the object or see it as good. This is why the relevant type of seeing requires for its continued presence the agent's continuing to be attracted to acting in a given way (see 1140b17–18, 1144a34).

5.3. *Acrasia (ἀκρασία)*

Aristotle in *Eth. Nic./Eth. Eud.* VII 3 introduces his famous analogy between the knowledge failure of the weak acratice person (ἀκρατής) and that of the young students or the drunk man repeating the verses of Empedocles. The weak acratice does not see correctly the best thing to do but her failure registers the fact that she is not properly attracted by the goodness of the action she sets herself to do. As such, on the present

17 For a helpful summary and development of this debate, see Irwin (1975).

view, her fault can be described either as a fault in desire or in grasp of the relevant conclusion. If there is something amiss with her perception of what is best to do, there will therein be a failure in her preferential desire. Similarly, if there is a failure in her preferential desire, there will therein be a failure in her perception of what is best to do. The two descriptions, “failure in preferential desire” and “failure in knowledge of what is best to do” both pick out the same failed state. Similarly, in *1150b25–26*, those who fail through excessive or over-speedy desires are also said to fail because they are prone to follow their imagination. The two descriptions, “being prone to follow one’s imagination against one’s knowledge” and “having excessive or over-speedy desires” will both refer to the same state, one which can be described either in terms of non-obedient desires or lack of knowledge of what is best to do.

It is, of course, very natural to understand failure in practical knowledge in such a way that one may have (as in the dual component account) intellectual knowledge of what is best to do and merely lack appropriate desire. However, if the interpretation offered here is correct, Aristotle should resist this description of what occurs. In his account, the weak acrates will be reduced to a distinctive “failed state”: one which he can describe as being like one who says but does not know. This failed state cannot be decomposed into ordinary intellectual cognition on the one hand and deficient desire on the other. It is not a case of perfectly acceptable intellectual cognition since such cognition is not possible in areas where one is attracted towards what is good to do. Put differently, the weak acrates will manifest a failed attempt at practical knowledge, not a perfectly adequate case of intellectual knowledge and a failed desire. An analogy may help to clarify Aristotle’s account. On one view, one who tells a lie may be seen as making a failed attempt at an assertion. He need not be seen as achieving a perfectly acceptable case of some lesser speech act, such as saying. So understood, assertion will not be analysed as saying plus some further action (or attitude). It will be a distinct and irreducible type of activity.

Discussion of Aristotle’s views on preferential choice, rational wish and acrasia has for several centuries oscillated between two poles. For one group, Aristotle intended by practical knowledge some type of purely cognitive success. In their “Socratic” view, the weak acrates does not intellectually know what is best to do. For the other, Aristotelian practical knowledge involves two independent components (separate existences): intellectual cognition + desire. In their “Humean” view, the weak acrates fails solely by not having a good second component. What has been sketched here is a third alternative, one not visible in either the Socratic or Humean accounts of practical knowledge or acrasia. For on Aristotle’s view, as interpreted here, to see (or think) something as good (or pleasant) is the same activity as desiring it (rationally or sensually).

Aristotle’s account of desire leads to a distinctive view of practical knowledge, practical reasoning and acrasia. It is the task for another day to set these out and examine them in detail.

6. *Objections: Does Aristotle Really Take Desiring A to Be the Same Activity as Seeing A as Pleasant or Thinking that A Is Good?*

A range of objections may be brought against the interpretation I have developed in this essay. I shall consider three particularly serious ones.

Objection (1). In *Metaphysics* XII 7, 1072a29 ff. Aristotle writes:

The object of sensual desire is what appears good, the first object of rational wish is what is really good (*καλόν*). We desire because something seems (*δοκεῖ*) to us rather than it seems to us because we desire it. For the starting point is thinking: the intellect is moved by the object of thought ...

Many think that in this passage Aristotle maintains that we desire A because we think that A is good. If so, they will conclude, he cannot have thought that rationally desiring A was the same activity as thinking that A is good. For, in their view, since the presence of the latter explains the presence of desire, he must have accepted that there are two distinct states present here.

It is important, however, to note that Aristotle's phrase "we desire because something seems to us ..." does not (explicitly) mention "goodness" at all. Rather, his emphasis appears to be on the fact of the desired object's seeming to us some way or other. Indeed, he continues by focussing on the fact that thinking is the starting point because *νοῦς* is moved by the object of thought. The intellect seems to be functioning here like simple perception (or *φάσις*) in *De anima* 431a8: that which grasps (*νοεῖ*) the object in question. If so, it will operate at a stage prior to thinking that the object is good or desiring it. One has to latch on to the object (in either perception, imagination or thought) before one can make the complex judgement that it is good (or desire it).¹⁸ Although the object grasped in thought (imagination or perception) is indeed good and the object of desire, it is not as yet grasped as good or desired. To desire A (or to think A good) is to take a further step beyond perceiving A, imagining A or thinking of A.¹⁹

There is a further, more direct, reply: even if Aristotle had held that we desire A because A seems good to us, this would not call into question the suggestion that (for

18 *De anima* 433b11 ff.: first of all there is the object which is desired (the first mover) which is thought of or imagined; next there is desire which is moved by the object of desire (presumably when it is thought of or imagined) and moves the body.

19 Is there a possible contrast? Could things look a given way to some creature because it desires it? This possibility is not ruled out: a creature might notice an object of prey (an A) because it is hungry and wants to eat something of this type. The presence of this desire could make it more "on the look out" for an A.

him) rationally desiring A and thinking A good are the same states. For if the phrase “A seems good” refers to the content of the relevant thought, we can still rationally desire A and therein think A good because “A seems good to us.” Consider an analogy: imagine that a philosopher identifies thinking A true and rationally believing A. He (or she) can still hold that we think A true and rationally believe A because A seems true to us. For in his (or her) view, our beliefs and thoughts can be explained by the fact that A seems true to us (i.e. by reference to the content of the proposition we believe).

Aristotle, of course, could not have accepted the last suggestion had he wished to account for what it is for something to seem true (or good) to us in terms of our rationally believing or desiring it. But there seems no reason to attribute any such aim to him. Indeed, on the present view, he is proceeding in a very different direction.

Objection (2). In *Eth. Nic.* 1113a12 ff., Aristotle describes preferential choice as follows:

Since what is chosen preferentially is what is desired on the basis of deliberation, preferential choice is deliberative desire for things in our power; for having judged (*κρίναντες*) through deliberation we desire in accordance with deliberation.

Some interpret this passage as follows: there is a state of judging something good which is followed (in the case of preferential choice) by desire. If one takes seriously the aorist participle, judging A good must precede and be distinct from desiring A. If so, they will conclude that here Aristotle thinks that there are two distinct existences (judging good and desiring), one of which precedes the other.

However, there is no reason to take the “judging” in this context as propositional: what is judged (or better discriminated) seems (in this context) to be an action or something to be done (1113a4–5). While this is selected on the basis of deliberation about what is best to do, it does not follow that the selection itself consists in a judgement that it is best to act in a given way. While in deliberation one may compare different courses of action in terms of what is best to do, what is chosen can still be an action: the one which deliberative imagination puts before our eyes. It is a further step (even if one necessitated by what has gone before) to desire to do that action or think of it as good or the one to be done. In this case, we will have imagination (albeit of a distinctive kind) which (like simple perception or thought) grasps the action in question: but it will still be another thing to desire to do it (or think that it is good, or best, to do it).²⁰ This passage, too, can and should be interpreted in a way consistent with the account of desire developed above.

²⁰ *De anima* 434a8–10 may be read in this way. One needs to deliberate whether one will do A or B. This requires us to weigh them on one (valuational) scale. On this basis one selects one action out of the many possible ones. The selection is based on which has most of the

Objection (3). Aristotle concludes his discussion concerning desire in the *De anima* with the following remark:

That which is capable of knowledge is not moved but stays at rest. Since the one judgement is of the universal and is a form of reason, the other is of the particular. ... [E]ither the latter opinion moves and not the universal one or both do, with the former rather at rest, the latter not. (434a15 ff.)

Some will reason as follows: if that which is capable of knowledge grasps the universal, this cannot be the same as that which is capable of desire. For the former, “stays at rest,” while the latter is moved when it is active (and desires something, see 433b16–17). If that which is capable of knowledge is not moved (even when it is active), its activity (e.g. grasping that A is good) cannot be identified with desiring to do A. Indeed, in the immediate context, Aristotle contrasts “that which is capable of knowledge” with desires: the latter are moved by each other when *acrasia* occurs, but the former remains still, unaffected by desire. If so, it will be concluded, rational thought and intellectual desire cannot be identical in this passage.

Consider first why that which is capable of knowledge is unmoved in cases of *acrasia*. In *Eth. Nic./Eth. Eud.* VII 3, 1147b15 ff., Aristotle provides an answer: the major premise of the *acrates* remains the same although his (or her) grasp on the particulars involved changes (in some way). Indeed, the *acrates's* relevant major premise must remain the same. Had it changed, he (or she) would no longer be merely *acratik* but would have become self-indulgent. This is why his (or her) grasp on the major premise remains relatively unmoved even though it is one of the things that causes movement.²¹

The relative stability of the *acrates's* grasp on the major premise (so understood) is consistent with that grasp being also a form of rational wish (*βούλησις*). The latter must also, in the case of the *acrates*, be relatively stable in precisely the same way as that which is capable of knowledge is. For his (or her) general rational wishes must also be untouched if he (or she) is to remain *acratik* rather than self-indulgent. So understood, this passage presents no special difficulties for the thesis that to grasp something as good is to desire it. That which has made correct rational desires an established part of its nature can be as unmoveable by other desires as that which is capable of knowledge.

relevant value. Having selected in this way the relevant action, one goes after it. In this case, deliberative imagination will grasp the object of desire (*τὸ ὀρεκτόν*); it is a further step (as in 433b10 ff.) for desire to operate to lead to action.

²¹ See *Eth. Nic./Eth. Eud.* 1147b15–17. I argue for this interpretation of these lines in Charles (1984) 122–124.

7. *Interim Conclusions*

Aristotle's view of desire, if rightly described above, cannot be assimilated either to the cognitive (Socratic) account of desire proposed by contemporary intellectualists or to the non-representational (Humean) one maintained by contemporary sentimentalists. For desiring to do A (as he understands it) cannot be reduced to the belief that A is valuable or to the inclination, pro-attitude or disposition to do A (or to a combination of the two). Aristotle, if I am correct, remains a distinctive, challenging and plausible voice in the contemporary (as well as the historical) debate about the nature of desire.

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JAAKKO HINTIKKA

Ta Meta Ta Metaphysika:
The Argumentative Structure of Aristotle's Metaphysics.

In the pages of the forthcoming Library of Living Philosophers volume devoted to my work,¹ there is an exchange between Simo Knuuttila and myself concerning the methodology of the history of ideas. One of the central issues in that exchange is the admissibility and significance of systematic ideas and results for the purpose of historical interpretation and other understanding. We agree happily about the admissibility, but subsequently I have come to think that in that exchange I did not emphasize strongly enough the value—sometimes amounting to indispensability—of topical insights for a full understanding of critical issues even when they are doctrinally incommensurable with the theses of our own contemporaries. It is not only that systematic insights *may* be used as an integral part of historical interpretation. Sometimes they *must* be so used. And this “sometimes” includes (I hold) some of the most important issues in the history of philosophy.

In this respect I have been putting my pen where my mouth is, in essaying interpretations of such topics as the Cartesian *cogito*² and Kant's theory of mathematics.³ It nevertheless seems to me that even more important case studies are in the offing. Here I will be dealing with only one target of historical interpretation, to wit, Aristotle's metaphysics. I am bold (or foolhardy) enough to maintain that recent systematic insights enable us to see the dynamics of Aristotle's science of “being qua being,” including its main tenets, the problems that led Aristotle to those views, the interplay of his different theses, the tensions between the different strands in his thought, and the seeds of future developments.

Fulfilling such a promise cannot be done within one paper. It would require at least a major tome, not to say a lifetime's work.⁴ What I can do here is to sketch briefly the outlines of my interpretation, without attempting anything like a full documentation. It probably will not come as a surprise that some of my leading ideas come from logical and semantical analyses (and syntheses).

1 Auxier (forthcoming).

2 See Hintikka (1962) and (1996).

3 For a discussion, see Webb (forthcoming).

4 The traditional discussions are surveyed and prominently contributed to among others by Aubenque (1962), Owens (1963) and Irwin (1988).

Needless to say, utilizing such sources does not seem to be much of a novelty. For Aristotle, metaphysics is a study of being. Hence distinctions between different varieties of being predictably play a major role in Aristotle's metaphysics, and indeed in any ambitious metaphysics. And Aristotle himself presents what looks like the most fundamental distinction of this kind, viz. the distinction between different categories, each with its characteristic variety of being.

This doctrine of the different categories does indeed occupy a prominent place in Aristotle's metaphysics. For one thing, it poses one of the crucial questions in Aristotle's science of being qua being, viz. how there can be a study of being as such when any one use of the notion of being inevitably falls into, and is apparently restricted to, some one category.

In the harsh light of contemporary logical semantics, Aristotle's doctrine of categories can be seen to be a logico-semantical rather than metaphysical doctrine. It is a chapter in the logic of natural language. In such a language, quantifiers usually do not range over some fixed universe of discourse. In the modern jargon, they are restricted quantifiers, occurring as ingredients of quantifier phrases. Such phrases are exemplified by

- (1) Some X who Y.

In order to understand (1), we must know what entities the quantifier ranges over. Differences between the largest non-overlapping ranges separate different senses (or uses) of the notion of being from each other. These differences can be indicated in different ways. They are indicated by the kind of predicate X is, or by the question word or phrase (what, where, when, ...). Hence four distinctions coincide in Aristotle's theory of categories: between the widest genera (i.e. widest ranges of quantifiers), between different senses of being, between different *predicabilia*, and between different questions one can ask about an entity. These four things match the different ways in which Aristotle speaks about his categories, and their parallelism relieves us of the question as to which of them Aristotle "really" meant. In any case, the distinction is predominantly logico-semantical. It tells little about the actual structure of beings, for instance about how the modes of being in the different categories are related to each other. More generally speaking, category distinctions pose a problem for a metaphysician who wants to develop a theory about all beings. How can such a theory or science be possible when the scope of each science is apparently restricted to one category only?

Some influential scholars, most prominently the late G.E.L. Owen, have seen a key to an answer to this question in a logical device they label "focal meaning" or *πρὸς ἓν* multiplicity of senses, in this case of different senses of being.⁵ But *πρὸς ἓν* ambiguity (if

5 See Owen (1988), especially ch. 10.

it is a genuine ambiguity) is not a logical notion. It is a descriptive but not explanatory notion. All that it says is that the different uses of being have something in common. Without spelling out what this common element is and how the categorically different senses of being are related to it, it does not really explain anything.

A more instructive idea here is what I will call the Frege-Russell (FR) distinction between being in the sense of identity, predication, existence and subsumption. (In this paper, I will normally ignore the least interesting sense, viz. the fourth one.)

This distinction is more relevant to the interpretation of Aristotle than one would guess on the basis of the secondary literature. For instance, commentators have frequently asked how Aristotle could have a single master science covering the different varieties of being in different categories. For some reason, they have not asked how Aristotle's single science of being qua being could cover the allegedly different FR meanings of being.

It is in any case important to realize what this distinction is and how it is construed. Everybody agrees that on different occasions verbs for being have different uses. They can express (among other things) identity, predication, existence and subsumption. Hence it is natural to say that on different occasions they have a different force or a different sense. However, there is a much stronger thesis implicit and sometimes explicit in modern philosophers like Frege and Russell. They in effect propose to explain the differences in use or force by claiming that the crucial verbs like *is* or $\epsilon\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\nu$ are ambiguous. This thesis might be called the FR ambiguity thesis. This thesis is in a sense built into the usual formalism of the basic part of our logic, known as first-order logic or quantification theory. If you use the notation of first-order logic (or an equivalent notation) as your framework of semantical representation, you have to assign a different semantical interpretation to verbs like *is* in its different uses, that is, you have to treat "is" as ambiguous.

The FR ambiguity thesis is generally thought of being an indispensable ingredient of any satisfactory logic. When I long time ago expressed reservations about it to Leonard Linsky, he exclaimed: "Nothing is sacred in philosophy any longer!" Yet recent systematic logical and semantical analysis has put the entire issue of the FR ambiguity thesis to a new light.⁶ Even though there are unmistakable differences between the different uses of *is* or $\epsilon\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\nu$, there is no need to explain them by claiming that they exhibit different meanings of the crucial verb. The distinction may be made instead by reference to the context.

Needless to say, there is nothing wrong about languages into which the FR ambiguity thesis has been built, for instance through their reliance of the usual logical symbolism. However, there can be equally good languages in which the distinctions between

6 See here, e.g., Hintikka (1979).

the different uses of verbs for being are made by means of the context without any postulation of an ambiguity. Indeed, considerations related to the remarks above on quantifier phrases suggest that this is how natural languages operate.

These massive facts have not been acknowledged by the majority of contemporary philosophers. And the same goes for the related overarching fact about the history of the concept of being in Western philosophy. The plain truth is that no recognized thinker before the nineteenth century assumed the FR ambiguity thesis. There have for instance been repeated discussions about whether Plato assumed the FR ambiguity thesis or some part of it in this or that passage. These discussions have involved such scholars as Gregory Vlastos, John Ackrill, Benson Mates, Michael Frede, Myles Burnyeat, F.A. Lewis, Lesley Brown, Job van Eck and several others. Several of them have correctly pointed out the significant absence of the ambiguity claim in this or that passage. Yet these discussions easily become confused, the reason being that if Plato did not distinguish between different FR senses of “to be” (εἶναι), it makes little sense to ask in which one he was using it in some particular passage. They are also somewhat parochial in that nobody within more than two millennia from Plato actually assumed that a verb like εἶναι is really ambiguous, so that you could ask which meaning it has in some given text or passage.

Here we have a major example of the relevance of systematic analytic work for the history of philosophy and for the history of thought that I have discussed with Simo Knuuttila.

Even though Aristotle’s relation to the FR distinction has received much less attention than Plato’s, it is not much of a surprise that he did not assume it as an ambiguity thesis, either. However in another respect Aristotle occupies a unique niche in the history of the notion of being. He actually considered the question whether verbs like εἶναι are ambiguous or not along the Frege-Russell lines, if only to reject the ambiguity thesis. This he does in *Metaphysics* IV 2 in a passage that served to set the tone of western metaphysics (and perhaps to some extent logic, too) for twenty-plus centuries.

If, now, being (τὸ ὄν) and one (τὸ ἓν) are the same and a single nature in the sense that they go together as principle (ἀρχή) and cause (αἴτιον) do, not in that they are explained by the same formula (λόγος) (though it makes no difference even if we interpret them similarly—in fact this would strengthen our case); for *one man* (εἷς ἄνθρωπος) and *man* are the same and *existent man* (ὄν ἄνθρωπος) and *man* are the same, and the doubling of words in *one man* and *one existent man* does not give any new meaning (it is clear that they are not separated either in coming to be or in ceasing to be); and similarly with *one*, so that the addition in these cases means the same thing and [*what is*] *one* is nothing apart from [*what*] is; and if, further, what each thing is [its οὐσία] is one in no merely accidental way and if similarly it from its very nature exists—all this being so, there must

be exactly as many species of being as of one. And to investigate the essence of these is the work of a science that is generically one. (*Metaph.* IV 2, 1003b22–35; translation from Ross modified.)

This is a most interesting passage. Aristotle is in the quoted passage obviously considering the identificatory version of the FR identity sense (his “one”), the existential sense (τὸ ὄν) and sundry predicated senses, exemplified by the attribution of being a man (ἄνθρωπος) to someone. Aristotle is hence unmistakably confronting the FR ambiguity thesis but rejecting it. This already makes his treatment of the notion of being radically different from the usual post-Fregean ones. There is clearly not the slightest hope of understanding Aristotle’s metaphysics adequately without recognizing this fact. When Aristotle announces in the quoted passage the generic unity of a science of being and of one, he is not overcoming the distinction between different categories. He is (to his own satisfaction) overcoming the FR ambiguity. The passage thus shows that although Aristotle was aware of the differences between the force that a verb for being has on different occasions along the lines of the FR distinction, he himself holds a concept of being in which the different Frege-Russell senses are included as components. From what he says elsewhere, for instance in the beginning of *Analytica posteriora* II, Aristotle countenances contexts in which some of the different FR forces are absent. For instance, in the absolute construction with εἶναι the verb can sometimes (but not always) have purely existential force, as e.g. in Ζεὺς ἐστίν, “Zeus exists.” In some other contexts, the existential sense may be absent, as e.g. in “Homer is a poet” which does not entail “Homer is” in the intended sense “Homer exists now.” (Cf. *De interpretatione* II, 21a25–29.)

Myles Burnyeat has pointed out that the Greek verb for becoming, γίγνεσθαι, exhibits the same kind of behavior as εἶναι. This is what necessitates the usual clumsy translation “X comes-to-be” where a completely literal English counterpart would read simply “X becomes.”

The quote from *Metaphysics* IV 2 also shows an important gap in the FR distinction between the different uses of verbs of being, in the form Frege, Russell and their followers have made the distinction. This gap concerns the identity sense (or use) of being. The kind of identity Frege envisaged is a minimal sense of numerical sameness. What is expressed by such a minimal claim is merely the sameness of the references of two expressions, as in “Hesperus is Phosphorus.” This minimal sense is what Frege’s identity sign = expresses. It is likewise the sense of = in first-order logic. But as words for sameness are used in ordinary discourse, the notion of identity and even the identity sign can express much more. In its mathematical employment, the identity sign can be an ingredient in our ways of expressing functional dependence. This sense plays no role in Aristotle. However, in natural language the concept of identity is often used to make statements of identification, that is, statements that can serve as answers to

wh-questions, for instance to *what-* or *who-*questions. We might call such a use of *is* the *is* of identification. From the quote above it is fairly obvious that such an *is* is what Aristotle is speaking of when he says that “one man” (we would probably put the same as “one and the same man”) does not say anything more than “man.” The force of an identity statement involving such a use of *is* is to spell out what entities one is talking about. An answer of the form “a is b” (where “a” refers to a person) has this force only when the questioner knows who b is. Then its force is in modern notation something like

$$(2) ((a = b) \ \& \ K(\exists x/K)(b = x))$$

This criticism pertains to all the usual expositions of the FR distinction, and not only to its application to Aristotle. In the general logic of quantification the logic of *is* is much more complex than is usually spelled out, and the same goes for its history.⁷ This is yet another problem area where topical insights can enrich an historical understanding.

There is a further difference between the different component senses of *ἔστιν* in Aristotle and the usual form of the FR distinction. In our modern perspective, Aristotle lumps together the existence of objects and the holding of facts. In other words, the *is* in the following two can for him be the same:

(3) X is.

(4) X is Y.

This is seen from *Analytica posteriora* II 1–2. There Aristotle also says that in a science both (2) and (3) have to be proved (when they have to be proved) by means of a middle term.

We can also see from the same quote that the distinction between the senses of being in different categories in Aristotle is totally different from the difference between the distinction between the different FR senses of being.

Aristotle’s postulation of a notion of being that comprehends the different FR senses is one of the crucial assumptions of his metaphysical theory. It is what lends his ontology and metaphysics a flavor distinctly different from their modern counterparts.

For one thing, since the different FR senses can according to Aristotle always go together, he can avail himself of certain arguments in which what can be said of one of the FR senses is extended to another. The prime example of such argumentation is Aristotle’s defense of the law of contradiction in *Metaphysics* IV 4.⁸ To make a long story short, the gist of his line of thought is that if we can say meaningfully that X *is*

7 Cf. here Hintikka (2004b).

8 Cf. Dancy (1975).

and is not in any sense of *is*, then it must be possible to do so also in the sense of the *is* of identification. But if the answer to the identificatory question of what X is, is *Y and not Y*, then in attempting to talk about X we literally are not talking about anything at all.

The other side of the same conceptual coin is that Aristotle's unified notion of being is full of problems and tensions. From our vantage point, the different FR senses exhibit different logical behavior. The *is* of identity is transitive and symmetric, but the *is* of predication need not be either. The former mandates substitutivity, while the latter does not. This lands Aristotle in *prima facie* paradoxes like the following (see *Sophistici elenchi* 5, 166b32–34):

- (5) Socrates is not Callias.
- (6) Callias is (a) man.
- (7) Ergo (?) Socrates is not (a) man.

This specious inference turns on substituting “a man” for Callias in the first premise, justified by the second premise.

A twentieth-century philosopher might have solved the paradox by claiming that the *is* in the first premise is an *is* of identity while the two other ones are *ises* of predication. Aristotle cannot avail himself of this idea, however, for εἶναι is not ambiguous for him. Instead, he pigeonholes the sophism in question as a fallacy of accident. *Prima facie*, this does not make much sense. Socrates is not different from Callias by accident nor is Callias a man by chance. Yet Aristotle's words make sense when we understand what an essential *is* meant for him. A statement X *is* Y is an essential one, not when Y reveals the true nature of X, but when it identifies X, that is tells us which entity X is.

Once we realize this, Aristotle's solution makes sense. Maybe the best we can do in absolute terms to identify Callias is to say that he is a man. However, saying that Socrates is not Callias does not help very much in figuring out which entity he is.

Thus we have reached an interesting interim conclusion. The root idea of the essential *is* X is that it serves to identify X. And the natural way of expressing this from our post-Fregean perspective is to say that the essential *is* is for Aristotle the *is* of identification. This relates also the *is* of identification to the notion of substance. For Aristotle, specifying the substance of X is not to let us know what X is made of but to specify which entity X is. And identifying the essence is what accomplishes this specification. Essence is for Aristotle literally τὸ τί εἶναι, to be something. And this “something” means the entity it is. In other words, knowing the essence of something does not mean knowing certain facts about it, such as its “essential properties.” It means knowing which entity it is, which is but another way of saying that the εἶναι in τὸ τί εἶναι is primarily the εἶναι of identification. This is among other things illustrated by Aristotle's insisting that one cannot know τὸ τί ἔστιν without knowing that the entity in

question exists. (See here e.g. *Posterior Analytics* II 7.) For clearly we can know what X is like, including what its essential properties are, without knowing that it is in fact extant. But apparently we cannot know which entity X is without knowing that it exists. We may here note also that in *De Int.* II, 21a27 Aristotle blames the failure of *Homer is a poet* to entail *Homer is* (i.e. *exists*) on the fact that in it ἔστιν is used accidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός).

This connection between substance and the *is* of identification might seem to be a far cry from what Aristotle actually says, and it does indeed require further explanations. Pending them, we nevertheless can now understand some of the most central themes in Aristotle's metaphysics. Among the most intensively debated questions in Aristotle is how the being of the denizens of other categories is related to the being of substances. Aristotle makes it clear that the being of substances is the focal sense of being to which the other senses somehow are related. But precisely what this relationship is, seems a much harder question to answer.

But perhaps it is not so difficult to figure out what Aristotle means. The root idea is that whenever one succeeds in saying anything meaningful, it must be about something, perhaps not about some thing, but in any case about some entity. Hence, if we want to spell out fully what we mean, we must spell out what that entity *is* (or those entities *are*). And according to what was just found, the variety of being encoded in this *is* (or *are*) is the *is* of identity, for the specification of what we are speaking about means specifying the substance in question. This specification is usually left tacit, but we must grasp what it is before we fully understand what is meant. Hence in any statement X *is* Y (with any kind of *is*), there is a way of spelling out its fuller meaning as follows:

(8) X is a certain substance Z, and Z is Y.

Here the first *is* is the *is* of identification while the second *is* can be whatever it was in X *is* Y, usually some kind of *is* of predication. In a way, it must therefore be in principle possible to separate the *is* of identity from the *is* of predication in such a simple statement. And the same analysis can be extended to more complicated constructions. And according to what was said earlier such an identificatory *is* specifies a substance.

Thus we can see how according to Aristotle the being of substances is involved in any other kind of being. Aristotle takes this to mean that we can study beings in all the different categories by studying substance. This account is thus his solution of the problem of how he can have a unified science of being in the teeth of the distinction between different categories. It provides the explanation of the structure of the meaning of εἶναι that the πρὸς εἶν idea could not have alone provided.

The analysis codified in (8) shows that the uses of the notion of being in categories other than substance are unavoidably complex, even though the complexity means only that the form of words X *is* Y does not provide a full analysis of its meaning.

This entanglement of the being of substances in the being of the members of the other categories is what Aristotle is getting at by speaking of focal meaning. For the purpose of fully understanding *X is Y*, we had to split the original *is* into two different components. Only if *X* is itself a substance term do we not need any further elaboration. Only the being of substances is in this sense unqualified, simple being, being *ἀπλῶς*, as Aristotle sometimes expresses himself. Only the study of substance is therefore a study of being qua being, which notoriously is Aristotle's own characterization of his metaphysics. Now we can see how literally it was meant by him, that is, as a study of being as simply of being in the same sense. Elsewhere being *ἀπλῶς* is used to refer to being without temporal qualifications, as e.g. in *De interpretatione* 9. Sometimes it is used to indicate the absolute construction which usually expresses existence. Here it means being which can be explicated without referring to the sense of being in some other category.

At this point, Aristotle faces a *prima facie* counter-example. Why cannot there be qualitative or other predicative terms that are restricted to one kind of substance? Aristotle's favorite example of such a term is "snub" which expresses concavity but apparently only in a nose. Such a non-substantive term would not need any supplementation by a substance term. Would it not express being qua being in the sense of being *ἀπλῶς*? Aristotle discusses the possibility of such terms in *Metaphysics* VII 5. The details of his discussions do not need to detain us here. However, the very problem he is discussing is hard to make sense of except on an interpretation not unlike the one proposed here.

The interpretation of the essential *is* as an identificatory *is* (Aristotle's one, *ἔν*) also shows the connection between Aristotle's theory of being and his other characteristic ideas. The identificatory component in Aristotle's notion of being can only be understood if you understand the relevant criteria of identification. They in turn depend on the way we individuate entities of different kinds. Small wonder, therefore, that the question of "the principle of individuation" has played a role in discussions of Aristotelian metaphysics. In this direction, one easily gets entangled in intricate problems, even in the apparently simple case of the individuation of physical objects.

What can be said of their identity? The most famous later discussion of the identification of physical objects is probably Descartes's meditation on his piece of wax. His thought-experiment about the way the piece of wax can change while maintaining its identity was calculated to show that its individuation is totally a matter of geometry or of "extension," as Descartes expressed himself. The connection with the problem of individuation is neatly illustrated by Descartes's calling extension a substance. But he did not produce a completely convincing argument. To specify a set of points in space as a function of time does not define a physical object. For that purpose some suitable continuity and contiguity conditions must obviously be satisfied. But what are those properties—and what is meant by continuity, anyway? I have tried (together with the late Merrill Hintikka) to show how these questions can be answered fully enough to enable us to formulate a purely kinematic account of the individuation of

physical objects.⁹ According to this account, the identity of physical objects is on this account so to speak at the mercy of the laws of motion and other kinematic matters of fact. This would not have satisfied Leibniz who tried to revive substantial forms as an individuating principle in the teeth of the seventeenth-century geometrical ontology of the physical world. Most likely he would have tried to introduce the forms via the laws that govern the motions of matter and via the deeper assumptions that underlie these laws. But even if such a Leibniz *redivivus* were successful, we would already have left Aristotle behind long ago.

For a purely extensional and kinematic account would not have begun to satisfy Aristotle even in the born-again Leibnizian form. He could not conceive of physical objects being together merely by the laws of motion, let alone sundry kinematic contingencies. Aristotle postulated a class of special factors which so to speak serve to keep physical objects together. They were his famous forms. They were real entities that could be instantiated in different kinds of matter. They were the carriers of the active potentialities that govern the world. They are what are expressed by the terms of scientific syllogisms. They can even be realized in the soul with all their potentialities. This notion of form is one of the most pervasive features of Aristotle's metaphysics.

Aristotle's reliance on forms as the principle of individuation marks a distinctly new ingredient in his overall metaphysics. Without this ingredient, substantial being would simply mean individuated being, and the essence of a being could in principle be anything that constituted its individuality. Essential properties of X would not necessarily bring out the deeper nature of X. They would simply be whatever distinguishes the substance X from all other substances. Many, maybe most, of Aristotle's comments on substance and essence can be understood and perhaps ought to be understood in this minimalist sense.

It was only when the substance became an amalgam of its form, thought of as an active potentiality, and its matter, which embodies the corresponding passive potentiality, that the idea of substance so to speak acquired its substantiality and essential properties began to exhibit the essence of their bearers. I do not think that it is possible to understand fully the dynamics of Aristotle's metaphysical theory without heeding this two-level character of his argumentation.

This is reflected in the near-ambiguity of such Aristotelian terms as τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, literally, "what it is to be something." In the weaker force of this phrase the verb εἶναι can be taken merely in the identity sense, but through Aristotle's use of form as the identificatory factor it acquires the further sense of "essential character."

Aristotle's doctrine of forms determined in many other ways, too, his metaphysics and the rest of his philosophy. It may even have influenced tacitly Aristotle's conception

9 See Hintikka & Hintikka (1989).

of syllogistic science.¹⁰ Let us assume that forms are what syllogistic terms express and also assume that our knowledge of one form is independent of our knowledge of any other form, so that in any body of knowledge we can separate what we know about any one form from what we know about the others. Then it literally follows logically, as I have pointed out together with Ilpo Halonen, that all explanations can be given a syllogistic form. And even though the subtle logic involved in proving this was of course beyond Aristotle's conscious ken, his logical intuitions may have been unwittingly influenced by such underlying logical relationships.

In any case, Aristotle's theory of a syllogistically structured science offers instructive examples of how the different FR component senses of εἶναι behave in different contexts. The logical form of such a science is clear.¹¹ It consists of sequences of nested terms syllogistically related to each other, all of them within the scope of a widest term of that particular science. This term defines the genus of that science. There are hence two irreducible premises in any one science, both to them of course of the form

(9) Every X is Y.

In one of them, Y individuates the genus that is the scope of that science, and that genus is defined by (9). We can call them generic premises. In the other kind, X and Y are proximate to each other so that no further term can be inserted between them. We can call them atomic premises. Aristotle distinguished them from each other in *Analytica posteriora* I 2 and 10.

In this framework, the behavior of the different FR senses can be specified explicitly.¹² In the primary premises, the εἶναι has to be assumed to have existential force only in the generic premise. For all the other terms C, existential force is proved as a part of the syllogistic inferences. These inferences are in typical cases of the (partly tacit) form

- (10) Every B is (an extant) A.
- (11) Every C is B.
- (12) Ergo: every C is (an extant) A.

The peculiarity in Aristotle's thinking is that in the minor premise (11) *is* need not be assumed to have existential force. The upshot is as if existence were a part of the force of the different predicate terms, a claim later challenged by Kant. In sum, in a syllogistic science existential force filters from the top down initially from the generic premise.

¹⁰ See Halonen & Hintikka (2004).

¹¹ Cf. Hintikka (1972).

¹² Cf. here Hintikka (1999).

In contrast, the *is* in the conclusion (12) has an identificatory force only when the syllogism (10)–(12) is an atomic one. Then the respective extents of the terms B and C coincide. The term B gives the proximate cause of C's existence and hence specifies the essence of C. In other words, B tells us why C is B, that is, why it is what it is.

Thus existence can be proved by any sequence of suitable syllogisms that need not be atomic ones. Therefore existence can be proved without proving the essence or the *why*. For this reason, Aristotle launches (in *Analytica posteriora* II 7–8) into the *prima facie* puzzling discussion about proving that vs. proving why.¹³ We can now see how this entire discussion can be distilled into a drop of logic.

The syllogistic framework also serves to highlight the difference between the respective roles of the notions of substance and essence in Aristotle. On the one hand he emphasizes that an explicit or tacit individuation is involved in all our talk of being. The entities so individuated are substances. On the other hand, essences are what distinguishes these different substances from each other.

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13 See here, e.g., Goldin (1996).

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Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Active Intellect

In *De anima* III 5 Aristotle introduces the influential doctrine of the so-called active intellect.¹ The chapter has puzzled readers and scholars from the very beginning, and it still does. As W.D. Ross notes, it is “perhaps the most obscure and certainly the most discussed of all Aristotle’s doctrines.”² It seems natural to connect what Aristotle says in *De anima* III 5 with his account of the divine intellectual being in *Metaphysics* XII, and it might seem that a divine intelligence has a crucial role in human psychology, too. However, the rest of the *De anima* gives no indication that Aristotle’s psychology would be essentially dependent on a divine intellect. Therefore, the question arises what the divine intellect’s role is in Aristotle’s psychology. Questions related to the active intellect are closely connected to two of Knuutila’s central interests, namely the human mind and the nature of divinity. Jaakko Hintikka also discusses it in passing in the *Festschrift* for Knuutila’s 50th birthday published in Finnish.³ Despite the enormous amount of literature on this topic, there is wide divergence of opinions concerning the basic outlines of the theory of active intellect. In the following, I shall attempt to clarify these outlines, first in Aristotle, then in Alexander. The main emphasis is on the question of whether or in what sense the active intellect intervenes in the acquisition of intelligible objects.

1. Aristotle

In the *De anima* Aristotle introduces the astonishing claim that we come to grasp intelligible objects through a kind of reception.⁴ These objects have the power to be grasped and this power is actualised when a sufficient amount of perceptual experience

1 As is typically noted, the expression “active intellect” (ποιητικός νοῦς) does not even appear in the text, only “passive intellect” (παθητικός νοῦς). However, the step from the passive intellect to the active one—or, as Kosman (1992) translates “maker mind”—is strongly suggested by the text.

2 Ross (1924) cxliii.

3 Hintikka (1996) 34.

4 Aristotle, for instance, argues that, before it thinks, our intellect is nothing actual at all (*De an.* III 4, 429a24). He also says that our intellect is capable of receiving (δεκτικός) the form of the object and potentially like it (429a15–16). Further, he compares receiving the intelligible

has been stored in our non-rational memory (cf. *An. post.* II 19).⁵ This means that if we want to say that according to Aristotle intelligible objects are abstracted from perceptual experience, we should avoid saying that we abstract them. To say so would suggest that our intellect somehow works on the perceptual material to abstract intelligibility from it.

Aristotle gives no hint that our intellect should somehow interpret perceptual data to abstract intelligibility from objects. Rather, he emphasises the pure receptivity on our part.⁶ He also makes clear that before our intellect comes to grasp intelligible objects for the first time, it is nothing actual and does not have any nature of its own except for its potentiality (*De an.* III 4, 429a22–24). In the same chapter (III 4, 429a18–21), he argues that if the intellect had a nature, this nature would prevent it from grasping some objects. Because intellect can grasp anything, it cannot have a nature of its own.

There are basically two ways of understanding Aristotle's argument here.⁷ To present the two readings we need to recollect that Aristotle analyses the intellectual apprehension of simple intelligible objects in the way that when we grasp such an object, our intellect becomes identical in form with the object (cf. III 4, 429b6). Now, the first reading of the argument would be the following. Given that we grasp intelligible objects so that our intellect becomes identical in form with them, our intellect could not grasp itself because it could never become what it already is. Another way to take the argument would be to say that the intellect cannot have a nature of its own, because this nature would prevent it from becoming completely identical in form with something else. On this second reading, the basic idea of the argument is to say that the intellect

form to perceiving, which is elsewhere characterised as reception of the perceptible form without matter (see, e.g. *De an.* II 12, 424a18–19; cf. 424b2; III 2, 425b22–23, III 4, 429a13–18, III 12, 434a29).

- 5 In the Middle Ages the theory that our intellect is in this way perfected by lower cognitive capacities of perception and memory was taken to be problematic. Aquinas rejected the assumption that the active intellect should be a divine agent. By contrast, it must be taken as human. However, if we assume that the active intellect is there to perfect our intellect, we run into the assumption Aristotle opposes in *Posterior Analytics* II 19 that such a high cognitive function would remain unnoticed in us. If we assume that the active intellect is not there from the very beginning, we need to explain how it got there and when.
- 6 It has not been highlighted in the scholarly literature that Aristotle also refers in passing to the passivity or receptivity of the human intellect in *Posterior Analytics* II 19. After explaining briefly—with a somewhat obscure analogy of soldiers turning around and returning to their original order—how universals are got from perception, he says that our soul is such that all this can happen to it (οἷα δύνασθαι πάσχειν τοῦτο, 100a14). So the universal contents in our reason Aristotle is talking about are not produced or laboriously abstracted by us; they simply come to our mind from the world and our soul receives them.
- 7 The two readings have been distinguished, e.g., by Calvin Normore (in a conference presentation at the WCPA meeting at the University of Victoria October 2004).

can only become completely identical in form with X if it itself lacks form. This is because if the intellect had a form, say Y, then it could not become X entirely; it could at best become Y+X.

Aristotle does not make it explicit, but the second reading of the argument seems to be the intended one. In fact, the argument is taken that way both by Alexander (*DA* 84, 15–17 Bruns)⁸ and by the author of the treatise on the intellect in the, possibly inauthentic supplement to Alexander's *De anima* (106, 18–113, 24 Bruns). In this supplement, often called *Mantissa*, the argument is specified as follows. If the intellect had a form, “its own nature ... would prevent it from grasping external things (τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀντίληψις), because it would constitute an obstacle (ἐμπόδιον) to grasping those things” (106, 28–29). The author might be aware that the argument can be understood in two ways. In any case, he goes on to give further grounds for taking the argument in the sense he does. He says (106, 31–107, 1) that sight, being the capacity to discern colours, has a colourless organ—for water is colourless—in which sight resides and through which the discernment of colours occurs, and similarly in the case of smell and touch (107, 1–4). He concludes (107, 7–9) that likewise the intellect cannot be any one of the objects it is supposed to grasp.

The idea of the analogy with sense perception is apparently the following. If we were to perceive colour Z through sight and our sense organ had a colour U, we could not perceive Z but only Z+U. Aristotle has an example (*De an.* II 10, 422b8–10) where he talks about a sick man tasting wine as bitter because his tongue is overflowing with bitter moisture. In this example it would not work to say that if our tongue has a tastable quality U, it could not become U because it already is such. Rather, Aristotle's example is that when a healthy person tastes wine, he will find it sweet, but a sick person tastes the same wine as bitter because of the bitter moisture on his tongue. If the argument were of the form that what already is something cannot become what it is, the example should go as follows. The sick person cannot taste bitter wine, because tasting bitterness involves becoming bitter and his tongue is already bitter. But this is not what Aristotle says in the example. The intellect, of course, is different, because it does not have an organ of its own. Still, it seems to me that the argument is intended in the sense that the nature of the intellect would prevent it from grasping other things. Aristotle does not connect this example with the argument of the intellect, and the evidence from the *Mantissa* is not conclusive. In any case, the argument is not the main topic of this article, and we can move on.

Now, it might seem that the human intellect, which before it thinks is merely a pure potency and nothing actual, is insufficient in explaining the active aspects of human thinking, such as abstraction, selective attention and free choice. Accordingly, many

8 Alexander says that the intellect's own form would prevent it from grasping what is different (ζωλύει τὴν τοῦ ἄλλοτρίου λήψιν, *De anima*, 84, 16).

have concluded, the active intellect is needed to account for these activities.⁹ There is not enough space to argue for this here in detail, but I do agree with scholars like Victor Caston who think that this does not seem to be what Aristotle has in mind at all.¹⁰ There is no direct positive evidence for the claim that the active intellect should be taken to be a component of an individual human soul. When Aristotle talks about the divisions between the active and passive or receptive aspects in the case of the soul, he does not say that it is a distinction within the human mind; the distinction may as well be one between two kinds of intellect, one in the human soul, the other outside it.

However, if the active intellect does not explain some of our rational functions, the whole notion seems to be in danger of becoming vacuous or at least unnecessary. If it is not needed to explain something in our thinking, why is it needed at all? Victor Caston, Michael Frede, and Stephen Menn have illuminated some of the reasons why Aristotle needs an active intellect.¹¹ Caston has emphasised its role as a final cause and hence explanatory of human thinking. Menn, for his part, underlines the goodness of the separate active intelligence. Frede sees the divine intellect as a principle of thinking activated in a human being at a certain point of his or her life. All the three scholars agree on the active intellect's divinity within the Aristotelian framework. Next we shall move to Aristotle's theory in more detail.

According to Aristotle, as there are perceptible objects (αἰσθητά) in reality, there are also intelligible ones (νοητά), and he says that intellectual apprehension (νοεῖν) is like perceiving (αἰσθάνεσθαι), something analogous to being affected (πάσχειν) by the intelligible object (ὑπὸ τοῦ νοητοῦ) (*De an.* III 4, 429a13–15). As mentioned above, Aristotle analyses perception as reception of the perceptible form without its matter. Intellectual apprehension of the objects for the first time is also conceived as reception of some sort.¹² When the intellect has received the forms for the first time, it can start thinking on its own initiative (429b5–9).

- 9 In antiquity Themistius maintained that the active intellect is a faculty or power of the human soul (see *In De an.* 102, 30–109, 3 Wallies). According to Themistius, this reading goes back to Theophrastus (see esp. 107, 30). Also in a commentary attributed to Philoponus preserved to us only in Latin, we find the idea that the active intellect is found in human soul but not in the same individual as the passive intellect it is supposed to aid to gain perfection. The active intellect is the intellect of the teacher (*On the Intellect*, 48, 32–33). Similar considerations in fact appear already in Themistius (*In De anima*, 104, 7–11).
- 10 Caston (1999) 200. For a recent suggestion that the active intellect is designed to explain basic cognitive functions of human beings, see Kosman (1992), who considers the active intellect explains consciousness or awareness. Even though I find part of Kosman's analysis illuminating, his conclusion seems to be overstated.
- 11 Caston (1999), Frede (1996) 388, and Menn (1992).
- 12 Cf. 429a15–16 where Aristotle says that our intellect is not affected but is capable of receiving the form (ἀπαθὲς ἄρα δεῖ εἶναι, δεκτικὸν δὲ τοῦ εἰδοῦς).

As scholars often point out, Aristotle distinguishes between two changes when he talks about intellectual thinking (*De an.* II 5, 417a21–b1).¹³ One is the very first reception of intelligible objects, which Aristotle compares to the acquisition of geometrical knowledge. This is a transition from first potentiality to first actuality. The second change can only take place when the intelligible objects have already been received; it is a change from having them but not thinking, into actually thinking of them. Aristotle compares the first actuality to the state of a sleeping geometer, who has knowledge of this field but is not currently using it; and the transition from not using it to using it is one from first actuality to second actuality.

With this distinction in mind we can ask whether Aristotle is concentrating:

1. on the transition from a first potentiality into first actuality, or
2. on the transition from first actuality to second actuality.

The first transition means our development from a potentially intellectual being into one who has intelligible objects in the intellect and is free to use them in thought. The second, by contrast, means a transition from having the objects in mind to actually thinking of them.

On the basis of *De anima* III 4, it seems plausible to say that only the first transition is conceived as reception by Aristotle. The intuition behind the claim that the acquisition of intelligible objects is reception would be that we can only acquire them accurately provided that we are not adding or subtracting anything to the object. If the acquisition is explained as pure reception, the requirement of accuracy seems to be met.¹⁴ There seems to be no reason to take Aristotle to claim that the second transition from not thinking to thinking is reception. Rather, when we have first received the intelligible objects, this changes our mind in the way that we can think of those objects any time we want to (cf. *De an.* III 4, 429b5–9). It would be a rather odd theory if, when moving from non-thinking to thinking we should be receiving something.

As mentioned above, the human intellect's passivity and receptivity have been taken to be indications that the active intelligence Aristotle refers to in *De anima* III 5 is needed to fill in a gap in Aristotle's theory. What, then, would the active intellect be doing to perform the desired task? Aristotle himself does not explain the matter in detail. He gives a very well known analogy:

¹³ Kosman (1992) 345 distinguishes them clearly.

¹⁴ Similarly, Aristotle assumes that perception is reliable, because the sense organs are neutral with respect to the qualities they can receive.

[A]nd there is another [intellect] which is so by producing all things, as a kind of disposition (ὡς ἔξις τις), as light; for in a way light too makes colours which are potential into actual colours (*De an.* III 5, 430a15–17; transl. from Hamlyn).

Basically, it seems that this analogy can be taken in two ways. The active intellect is acting on:

- A. the objects
- B. the subject

Keeping now in mind the distinction previously made between two kinds of transitions from potentialities to actualities (1 and 2 above), we have four different ways to explain the active intellect's effect.

- A1. the active intellect is making the potentially intelligible objects actually intelligible such that the human potential intellect can receive them from perception (i.e. the active intellect is acting on the objects and transforming them from first potentiality to first actuality)
- A2. the active intellect is making the objects actually grasped (i.e. the active intellect is acting on the objects so that they are transformed from first actuality to second actuality)
- B1. the active intellect is making us such that we are able to think on our own initiative (i.e. transmits our potential intellect from first potentiality to first actuality)
- B2. the active intellect is affecting us so that we start to think (i.e. the active intellect is taking us from first actuality to second actuality).

The analogy strongly suggests the reading A1.¹⁵ Aristotle at one point says that things with matter are potentially intelligible (*De an.* III 4, 430a6–7) and the analogy with light seems to suggest that the active intellect is making the merely potentially intelligible objects into actually intelligible ones.

Despite the initial appeal of A1, there has been in the recent scholarly literature a tendency to resist it. L.A. Kosman and Michael Frede argue that the transition Aristotle is focusing on is (2), i.e. the one from first actuality to second actuality. Neither of them explicitly makes the distinction between A and B, i.e. the distinction between the possible targets of the active intellect's illuminating activity, but their views can be taken to be combinations of A2 and B2. The active intellect makes the objects thought and

¹⁵ Also Kosman notes that this reading is initially more plausible, but argues against it. In fact, however, his target in the argument is a combination of A1 and B1.

it makes us think. Kosman couples A₁ with B₁ and calls the combination of these two “the Standard View,” and argues against it.¹⁶ He concludes that the active intellect—or the “maker mind” as he translates it—should be taken to be a psychological-theological principle of awareness, which explains the fact that we are conscious beings.

Frede also emphasises the second transition. He claims that the analogy with light is to be conceived in the way that the full actuality of colours is only realised in an act of seeing, and Aristotle wants to say that as light makes visible things actually seen, the divine active intelligence also makes the intelligible objects actually thought.¹⁷ He thinks that the active intellect is to be conceived as a divine intellect.¹⁸

However, it seems that a decision between 1 and 2 does not remove all perplexity about the doctrine. As both Kosman and Frede also admit, light is needed both in the first and second transition in the case of seeing. Therefore, it seems that in preferring one to the other we cannot completely exclude the rejected one. Rather, the issue seems to be one of conceptual priority. I agree that Aristotle tends to think that higher or more perfect forms of certain activities are conceptually prior to those that are less perfect or lower. Yet, we cannot deny the activity of the active intellect in the first transition.

A more radical question needs to be posed. What would happen if we completely removed the active intellect from the picture?¹⁹ Supposing—as we here do—that the active intellect is the first cause and the unmoved mover, the removal of the cause and the mover would destroy the world as well. In the Aristotelian framework, if there was no order structuring the world, there could be no actual things either, because being an actual thing involves being structured by a form. Further, to say that the order is intelligible amounts to saying that it is an order. To say that the world is unintelligible would mean that it is a complete chaos with no structure and such chaos could not exist. Therefore, if there were no active intellect, there would be nothing to grasp or anyone to grasp.

As such, this thought experiment does not tell us anything very specific about Aristotle’s psychology—except perhaps that it is realist in the sense that our apprehension is about external existing objects. What if we tried to make the same experiment in a more detailed way? Let us assume *per impossibile* that there is a world without the active intellect and there are also objects and subjects, what would be missing from Aristotle’s psychology? To me it seems that Aristotle would say that objects in that kind of a

16 Kosman (1992) 347. The capital letters, Kosman says, are intended to indicate that he does not commit himself to the claim that the view should actually be standard.

17 Frede (1996), especially p. 382.

18 He refers to the passage in the *Eudemian Ethics* (VIII 2, 1248a24–27).

19 Victor Caston (1999) asks a similar question in his article. In many ways I agree with his analysis and I am not opposing his conclusion. What I say can rather be taken as complementary.

world would not be intelligible, and hence the subjects could not intellectually grasp them. In that framework the whole discussion about the intelligibility and capability of intellectual apprehension would be pointless.

Someone might question the results or the possibility of this thought experiment. It, nevertheless, can be used to illuminate the following aspect of Aristotle's theory, which I take to be crucial. For Aristotle the theory of the active intellect is not primarily a psychological one (in the sense of pertaining to human psychology). Rather, the theory of the active intellect is concerned with the metaphysical preconditions of intellectual apprehension. If we could separate Aristotle's psychology from these metaphysical background assumptions, it seems that it could do without the active intellect. Yet, it is another question whether Aristotle's psychology can be treated as separated from such assumptions.

If we go back to the analogy with light, the following can be noted. Even though light has an indispensable role in seeing, this does not entail that light would be the decisive cause of seeing in the Aristotelian framework. Rather, it is a necessary condition for seeing to take place that the medium be illuminated. The object's potency to be seen or grasped cannot interact with the subject's potency to see or grasp if certain necessary conditions do not hold. The relevant condition, in the case of seeing, is that there is light. In the case of grasping it is that there is a divine intellect, which accounts for the permanent eternal condition for the world's intelligibility to be actualised in intelligent beings.

Ultimately, the need for the active intelligence in Aristotle's theory seems to be connected with his tendency to prefer actuality over potentiality. This means that if we managed to think of a world without the active intelligence, this would leave us with too many potentialities. The objects' potentiality to be apprehended and the subjects' potentiality to apprehend would be only partly realised in acts of apprehension at any given moment. The active intelligence is needed to fill in this spot in the equation of potentialities and actualities and to explain the eternal possibility of intellectual apprehension.²⁰ It seems that the mere existence of the active intellect constitutes appropriate conditions for us to receive and think of intelligible objects. Because, according to Aristotle, the active intellect is eternal and it is eternally performing its intellectual activity, these appropriate conditions obtain eternally in a universe grasped by Aristotle's terms. This means that we do not need to suppose that the active intellect should interfere in the reception of the intelligible objects or our starting to think of them.

20 Hintikka in fact makes a rather similar suggestion in the *Festschrift* for Knuuttila's 50th birthday; see Hintikka (1996) 34. However, unlike Hintikka, I do not commit myself to a theory of the objects of divine intellection.

2. *Alexander of Aphrodisias*

As for Alexander of Aphrodisias, our knowledge of what he says about the role of the active intellect and its role in human cognitive development is found in his *De anima* (*DA*).²¹ His commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* is lost, but Alexander's own treatise is also largely based on Aristotle. Alexander is well known for identifying the active intellect with god, i.e. with the first cause and the unmoved mover of the universe (*DA* 89, 9–19). Alexander's theory, as well as Aristotle's, was highly influential later.²²

Alexander is with Aristotle in claiming that when we human beings are born, we do not have an intellectual disposition ready to be used when we wish, but we only have a potentiality for receiving such a disposition (81, 13–15). Alexander calls this potential of ours “material intellect” (ὕλικός νοῦς, 81, 24), because, he says, it is characterised by a potentiality to become something and that which becomes something serves in a sense as matter to that which it becomes (81, 22–28). Therefore, it is not meant, at least in any straightforward sense, as the claim that the intellect is a material entity. Like Aristotle, Alexander also compares our potential intellect to an empty writing tablet on which nothing stands written (*DA* 84, 24–25).²³ He, however, makes the analogue even more specific by pointing out that our potential intellect should not be taken as the tablet itself, because the tablet suffers material change and is affected when the letters are written on it. Rather, our intellect is like the tablet's ability to receive writing on it, its suitability (ἐπιτηδειότης) for being written on. His idea is that, contrary to the tablet, this capacity is not affected in the strict sense by the letters written on the tablet, but is perfected or fulfilled. (*De anima* 84, 25–85, 5.)

Alexander also follows Aristotle in arguing that the potential intellect is without a nature, because having a nature would prevent it from grasping other things (84, 15–17). He is quite clear in taking the argument in the second way distinguished above—that is in the sense that the intellect's nature would somehow prevent it from becoming completely identical with any other object in form. According to Alexander, the intellect's own nature would prevent it from grasping something alien (ἀλλότιον) to it.

Now, given that the material intellect is a receptive capacity, we can ask what it receives. Two different possibilities suggest themselves. First, we could take it as receptive of intelligible objects (νοητά). Second, it is possible that our potential intellect

21 Some scholars have argued that also the treatise on the intellect in the so-called *De anima Mantissa* traditionally appended to Alexander's *De anima* was written by Alexander and it complements the theory of the *De anima*. I shall concentrate on the *De anima*.

22 Sharples provides a rich footnote on the influence of Alexander's theory; see Sharples (1987) 1204 n. 85.

23 Cf. Aristotle *De an.* III 4, 429b31–430a2.

is not receptive of intelligible objects but of the intellectual disposition (ἔξις). Both of these alternatives have advocates among scholars.

To assume that our material intellect receives intelligible objects leads to a problem which has been recognised for a long time.²⁴ The problem arises because of the following assumptions. Alexander says—as Aristotle once does—that enmattered things are potentially intelligible (δυνάμει νοητά, 87, 29). He says explicitly that the intellect—the context being now a discussion of the human intellect, not the divine active intellect²⁵—has to make the perceptible things intelligible to itself by separating or abstracting (χωρίζειν) them from their material realisation, and thus turning them into pure objects of thought (84, 20–21).²⁶ But now it seems extremely problematic to claim that the human potential intellect would do this. How could a mere pure potency of reception perform the activity of separating the form from its material circumstances or conditions? To say that it does would be like saying that the tablet's capacity to receive writing would somehow make letters appear on the tablet (or such that they can appear on the tablet), which seems absurd.²⁷

Second, we could say that our potential intellect is receptive of the intellectual disposition, not intelligible objects.²⁸ Only when we have received the disposition, are we able to abstract intelligibility from the enmattered things. This, however, leaves us with the question of how we received the intellectual disposition in the first place.

It has occurred to various scholars that this problem is a possible application of the active intellect. The suggestion is often coupled with the claim that the treatise on intellect in the *Mantissa* was also written by Alexander, and that the treatise solves this problem by referring to the active intellect.²⁹ It is not possible, however, to discuss the *Mantissa* within the limits of this short piece. I shall concentrate on the question of whether the problem can be solved in the framework of Alexander's *De anima*.

There have been at least two different attempts to claim that Alexander's doctrine in the *De anima* is not problematic in the way described above. One of them makes reference to the active intellect, the other does not. I shall treat the latter first.

Schroeder has argued against Moraux and Bazán that the Greek word for power or capacity (δύναμις), which is crucial in Alexander's description of the human potential

24 For the problem, see, e.g., Moraux (1942) and Bazán (1973). Moraux claims that because of this problem, Alexander's theory is contradictory; see Moraux (1942) 132–142. This claim has been accepted by Bazán, but denied by Schroeder (1982).

25 Cf. Sharples (1987) 1207.

26 Cf. 87, 24–29, where Alexander says that the intellect makes it intelligible to itself by abstraction of what it is for the composite entities (τὰ σύνθετα) to be the kinds of things they are.

27 Cf. Moraux (1942) 75.

28 Schroeder (1982) makes this suggestion.

29 See, e.g., Bazán (1973) 472; cf. Moraux (1967) despite his original rejection of this view.

or material intellect, should not be taken to indicate passivity.³⁰ Rather, it should be understood as a power to perform the act of separation of intelligible objects. It is undeniable that δύναμις also means power. It is also clear that Alexander is careful in specifying that the human potential intellect is not strictly speaking affected by anything. However, I do not agree with Schroeder in the analysis of the latter claim for the following reason.

According to Schroeder, Alexander's main reason for saying that the material intellect is not affected is in order to argue that the acquisition of intelligible objects is not passive or receptive, but is active separation of the objects from their material circumstances. But Alexander's explanation is not that the material intellect is not passive because it is active. On the contrary, Alexander says that only actual things can be affected in the strict sense of the word. The potential intellect is not an actual thing because it has no form before taking on the objects; being no actual thing, it cannot be affected (οὐδὲν πάσχει, 85, 3) in this sense. Therefore, Alexander denies that the intellect is affected in the literal sense, because this kind of affection involves a change in an actual thing. However, Alexander is not denying that the human potential intellect is receptive. Indeed, when arguing that the human potential intellect is receptive of all objects precisely because it is a pure potentiality, he says quite clearly that the material intellect is a capacity for *receiving* the forms (ἐπιτηδειότης τις ... ἐστὶν ὁ ὕλικός νοῦς πρὸς τὴν τῶν εἰδῶν ὑποδοχὴν, 84, 24–25). This strongly suggests that Alexander considers the forms to be received. The question still remains whether abstraction can be taken to be reception.

In a recent sourcebook, Richard Sorabji reads Alexander's *De anima* in the way that it already contains the doctrine according to which the active intellect turns our potential intellect into dispositional intellect, i.e. such that we can think on our own initiative.³¹ He refers to a passage later in the treatise where Alexander says the following:

And since there is a material intellect of a sort (καὶ ἐπεὶ ἐστὶν ὕλικός τις νοῦς), there must also be a productive [or active, ποιητικός] intellect, which comes to be the reason for the disposition of the potential intellect (ὅς αἴτιος τῆς ἕξεως τῆς τοῦ ὕλικου νοῦ γίνεται) (88, 23–24; my translation).

Sorabji takes this to mean that “the active intellect gives the material intellect its proper disposition.”³² He does not, however, intend this to mean that only after this encounter with the active intellect are we able to perform the abstraction. Rather, he says that our potential intellect is already capable of abstracting concepts (νοήματα) from the

³⁰ Schroeder (1982).

³¹ Sorabji (2004) 104.

³² *Ibid.*

enmattered objects presented in sense perception, but it cannot use them in thought without the aid of the active intellect if the perceptible objects it is thinking of are absent. Therefore, with respect to the distinction between the two transitions from potentiality to actuality made above, Sorabji's position is the following. According to Alexander, the transition (1) from first potency to first actuality (from not having any contents in the intellect to having some basic concepts there) is explained by the human potential intellect, whereas the second transition (2) (from having concepts but not using them in thought to actually using them) can only be explained by reference to the active intellect. In the four-fold division we made above, this means that Sorabji claims Alexander maintains B₂.

I agree with Sorabji that Alexander's text strongly suggests the reading that the abstraction of concepts is performed by the human material intellect. Further, Alexander is explicit in saying that the active intellect is a reason for the potential intellect's becoming dispositional. However, I am not entirely happy with the following claims: (i) that we are able to abstract concepts only when the objects are present, but we are not able to think of them in their absence without the aid of the active intellect, and (ii) that the active intellect *gives* the material intellect its disposition.

The evidence for claim (i)—that we can only abstract concepts on our own when the things are present but we are not capable of thinking of them when they are absent—is found in the following passage:

Initially this kind of disposition (ἡ τοιάδε ἕξις) arises in the intellect through a transition from continuous activity related to the perceptible objects into obtaining a kind of theoretical vision concerning the universal (ὡσπερ ὄψιν τινὰ ἀπ' αὐτῶν λαμβάνοντος τοῦ καθόλου θεωρητικῆν), which it at first called a concept (νόημα) or a notion (ἔννοια). When we have more such experiences and the notions become variegated and manifold so that it is possible to grasp the objects without the underlying perceptual conditions (ὡς δύνασθαι καὶ χωρὶς τῆς αἰσθητικῆς ὑποβάθρας ποεῖν τοῦτο), it is intellectual thinking (νοῦς). (*De anima* 85, 20–25; my translation.)

I do not contest the claim that Alexander here distinguishes between concept formation from perceptible particulars and intellectual thinking. However, I do not find here the idea that we could not have the intellectual disposition without divine intellectual intervention. What I think is at stake is the following distinction. At the beginning, when we have just started abstracting concepts, we use image-like presentations to aid our thinking. (I take “the underlying perceptual conditions” to refer to these presentations.) “Thinking” by resorting to such presentations, Alexander says at the end of the quotation, is not in fact intellectual thinking (νοῦς) in the proper sense. Rather, intellectual thinking requires that we are able to grasp complex wholes on a

purely abstract level without using images stored in the perceptive soul. To illustrate the distinction, let me take an example. If I do not know much about zoology, I have to recall what a horse looks like in order to be able to answer questions concerning what kind of animals horses are. On the other hand, if I am a zoologist specialised in horses, I can answer these kinds of questions on the basis of my theoretical understanding alone.

Someone might respond that the above passage is not even meant to contain a reference to the active intellect, but this only comes later in the treatise. I agree. I have not explained yet why I think a divine intervention is not needed to explain the transition from abstracting concepts into thinking. I shall now give the reasons for this further claim.

Firstly, given that I am, due to my material intellect, capable of abstracting concepts, it is not clear why having these concepts is not a sufficient condition for my having the intellectual disposition as well. Alexander is quite clear in saying that the dispositional intellect is a kind of depository of concepts (*νοήματα*) (86, 5–6) and this suggests that he would take having concepts to be a sufficient condition for having the intellectual disposition, too. Why should we think that we cannot use the concepts we can abstract from present perception in thought unless the divine intellect gives us this disposition?

The crucial piece of evidence for the claim that the transition is due to divine intervention comes later in the treatise, where Alexander says that the active intellect explains or is a reason (*αἴτιος*, 88, 23–24) for the fact that our potential intellect turns into dispositional intellect. That much is undeniable. However, I am not completely convinced that we should take *αἴτιος* here in the straightforward sense that the active intellect *gives* us the intellectual disposition. Such reading takes *αἴτιος* as a kind of agent causality. I do not claim that it would be impossible to have *αἴτιος* referring to something analogous to agent causality. However, in the case of the active intellect and the first cause of the universe any direct form of what we would call causation is denied. Rather, it is taken to move as a final cause. Therefore, I do not think that this line provides us with sufficient evidence for the claim that our actual thinking is brought about by an act of the active intellect. I prefer taking Alexander quite literally here. He is saying that the active intellect is *explanatory* of the coming into being of the intellectual disposition. Being explanatory can be understood indirectly and it is not necessary to assume that a divine intellect should intervene between merely having concepts and using them freely in thought.

Another reason why it is problematic to claim that Alexander resorts to divine intervention to explain how we change from thinkers who are only capable of abstracting concepts to thinkers who actually think, is the following. Earlier in the treatise Alexander makes it clear that the proper disposition of the intellectual capacity comes about through habituation and instruction (*διὰ διδασκαλίας τε καὶ ἔθων*, 81, 25). This, he says, cannot be acquired by all human beings, but only by those who are intellectually

gifted. Therefore, he does explain how the intellectual disposition is supposed to be acquired: through using and habituating our cognitive abilities as well as receiving teaching.

In that passage (81, 22–82, 15) Alexander makes a further distinction between (a) common (*κοινός*) intellect belonging to all as an elementary conceptual ability and (b) proper intellectual disposition including advanced theoretical understanding. This distinction is not followed systematically in the treatise. However, it matches quite well with what we found from the passage (85, 20–25) quoted a little while ago. Both passages pay attention to the fact that all human beings have a basic ability to master concepts, but not all grasp complex theoretical wholes concerning the nature of things and the explanations of natural phenomena. The latter involves theoretical or scientific knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*) and comes about in those who are gifted through instruction and habituation, that is, through education and research.

Now we are in a position to return to the problem articulated by Moraux in Alexander's doctrine. The problem is how the human material intellect, which is characterised as pure receptivity, can manage to perform the abstraction of concepts from perception. I do not propose to solve this problem, but suggest that we look at it from another angle. When distinguishing between the "common intellect" and the dispositional intellect at the beginning of his discussion of the various aspects of intellect, Alexander indicates that the common intellect, i.e. mastering some basic concepts, is acquired without any special effort by human beings. To explain the distinction, he compares intellectual capacities with our ability to learn to walk (82, 5–19). All human beings are able to have some concepts and thus a minimal share in intellectual activity because of our natural ability of having concepts. This is analogous to the fact that all of us—who are not seriously disabled—learn to walk quite naturally. By contrast, Alexander says, we do not come to have comprehensive theoretical knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*) so easily. Indeed, the acquisition of that kind of knowledge requires active work. From this perspective the receptivity of our material intellect can be taken to refer to the manner in which we learn the basic concepts. We come to do this naturally as children and, therefore, such basic concept formation simply happens in us. This is why it can be characterised as reception.

As I said, I do not think this suggestion completely solves the problem articulated by Moraux.³³ It still seems problematic to claim that, on the one hand, the material intellect is a purely receptive potency and, on the other hand, that it performs the abstraction.

33 I think that this problem is related to the fact that Alexander's metaphysics differs from Aristotle's. Whereas Aristotle assumes that the intelligible form is there in the perceptible instances as an immaterial component determining what kind of a thing the thing is, Alexander does not quite accept this idea. However, the issue cannot be dealt with here. For Alexander's metaphysics, see Tweedale (1984) and Sharples (1987).

When attributing such cognitive functions to the intellect, Alexander excludes the kind of solution we have found in Aristotle. We can read Aristotle in the way that the intelligible forms are actually, and not merely potentially, intelligible because the existence of the active intellect provides the appropriate conditions for us to receive them. This solution is not open to Alexander, because he demands that our intellect makes the objects intelligible to itself. Nonetheless, I do think we have explained why Alexander characterises basic concept formation as reception and distinguishes it from acquiring the intellectual disposition in the proper sense.

Conclusion

It has been argued above that for Aristotle the doctrine of the active intellect does not entail a divine intervention either in the process in which we receive intelligible objects from external things or when we start thinking of them. Rather, it has been suggested that the doctrine of the active intellect is concerned with the metaphysical presuppositions of the possibility of thinking in general. According to this view, the existence of a divine intellect is necessary to explain the intelligibility (or the ordered nature) of the world, but its role in the theory of human psychology is indirect.

From the section concerning Alexander of Aphrodisias, it can be concluded that Alexander does not assume that the active intellect either abstracts concepts for us or directly gives us the intellectual disposition. The former is supposed to be a function of the material intellect; the latter requires research and education. I have discussed the longstanding problem in Alexander's theory concerning how the material intellect can at the same time be taken to be a purely receptive potency and be capable of abstracting concepts from perception. I have suggested that Alexander means receptivity in the sense that some abstraction of concepts happens quite naturally in all human beings. This is important, because it entails that all human beings naturally or automatically receive some general truthful information about the world. Finally, it can be suggested that the problem in Alexander's theory might have been one of the reasons why later on in the commentary tradition it was fairly standard to assume that the active intellect must have a role in human psychology.

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Plotinus on Thinking Oneself and the First-Person

I

According to Plotinus, there is a first principle, the One or the Good, that is beyond thinking and beyond being in the sense of having any determinations (which is not to say that it is beyond existence).¹ Second in order after the One is the universal intellect. It is universal both in the sense that it is not the intellect of any particular soul and in the sense that its thought embraces everything there is. A rather high percentage of Plotinus' *Enneads* deals with this universal intellect, which I shall hereafter refer to as "Intellect." This Intellect is a perfect knower, a thinker who thinks and knows everything there is to be thought and known. Moreover, it thinks these things in as perfect a manner as can be conceived, intuitively and veraciously. Thus, we may say that it is an ideal knower or "cognizer."

As one would expect, Plotinus usually talks about this intellect in the third person, saying about it such things as: "Intellect is second, after the One," or "Intellect thinks itself," or "Intellect is identical with its objects of thought." On a few occasions, however, he imagines Intellect thinking. Interestingly, Intellect thinks in the first-person on those occasions. That is to say, when Plotinus imagines such thinking, Intellect does not think thoughts like "Justice is Beauty," as we might expect, but rather thoughts like "I am." It strikes me that, in choosing such first-person expressions, Plotinus is not employing a rhetorical or merely expressive device. The first-person—or so I shall argue—is crucial for his conception of Intellect's self-thought or, what amounts to him as the same thing, its self-knowledge.

It is well known that Plotinus' doctrine of Intellect owes much to Aristotle and his followers, in particular Alexander of Aphrodisias.² Aristotle and Alexander also speak of God or the active intellect as thinking itself and insist on the identity of the divine mind with its objects of thought. Alexander, in fact, plausibly identified the active intellect of *De anima* III 4 with the divine mind of *Metaphysics* XII. The relevant passages in Aristotle (*De anima* III 4, *Metaph.* XII 7 and 9) are obscure and much disputed, as one might expect. It seems to me that whatever may be the exact correct interpretation

1 The topic dealt with in this paper is treated at greater length in Chapter II of my forthcoming book on Intellect in Plotinus (Oxford University Press).

2 See, e.g., Armstrong (1960) and Szlezák (1979).

of them, however, there is no indication that Aristotle (or Alexander) had in mind any kind of self-reflexive act of thought when they described divine thinking as self-thinking, and even fewer indications that a first-person stance plays any role in their conception of self-thinking. As Sorabji puts it, “There need be nothing narcissistic in the claim that God thinks of himself, or regressive in the claim that he thinks of his own thinking.”³ For the Peripatetics, the intellect is identical with its object of thought because the act of thinking is numerically identical with the object of thought, and the intellect acting is identical with its acts. The divine intellect is essentially an act of thinking and the object of its thought exists in this act. Since Intellect and its objects are identical, it follows trivially that the intellect thinks itself when it thinks its object.⁴ Plotinus, too, argues in a similar way for the identification of the intelligibles with Intellect, e.g., in V.3.4.

Plotinus’ understanding of self-thinking, however, contains elements that go beyond anything reasonably attributable to Aristotle. Plotinus’ conception of self-thinking turns out to be reflexive in a way Aristotle’s is not. Indeed, Plotinus’ conception of self-thinking reveals a stronger or fuller notion of self-thinking than I know from any other philosopher. I hope to elucidate this in what follows.

2

Let us have a look at these first-person passages that I mentioned. In V.3.10 we find the following passage:

For if [that which thinks] directed its gaze to a single object without parts, it would be speechless (ἡλογίῃθη): For what would it have to say about it, or to understand? For if the altogether partless had to speak itself, it must, first of all, say what it is not; so that in this way too it would be many in order to be one. Then when it says “I am this,” if it means something other than itself by this “this,” it will be telling a lie; but if it is speaking incidentally of itself, it will be saying that it is many or saying “am, am” or “I, I.” Well, then, suppose it was only two things and said “I and this.” It would already be necessary for it to be many: for, as the two things are different and in whatever manner they differ, number is already there and many other things. Therefore, the thinker must grasp one thing different from another and the object of thought in being thought must contain variety; or there will not be thought of it, but only a

3 Sorabji (1983) 147.

4 See Norman (1969) and Sorabji (1983).

touching and a sort of contact without speech or thought, prethinking because Intellect has not yet come into being and that which touches does not think. (V.3.10, 31–44)⁵

In the context, Plotinus is arguing that thinking (it is clearly Intellect's thinking he has in mind) involves plurality. The passage is a part of his argument for this. It so turns out, however, that thinking involves plurality or otherness in more than one way. It involves a distinction, hence a duality, between a thinker (*ὁ νοῶν*) and the object of thought, and the object of thought itself must be complex. Plotinus is perfectly able to distinguish between these two kinds of plurality. At some crucial places, however, he seems to conflate the distinction between the two. The passage from V.3.10 is a case in point. Parts of it are quite obscure in the details. Whichever way they are to be interpreted, however, the passage provides a clear example of this kind of conflation of the distinction between otherness within the object and otherness between subject and object. "The partless" spoken of here is introduced as a partless object of thought, a hypothesis that is to be shown to be untenable. Hence, the object of thought cannot be partless. However, when Plotinus turns this into the question about how the partless could "speak itself" and argues that this would be impossible, he seems to be addressing the distinction between subject and object as well: the partless could not speak itself without separating itself, could not separate the "I" from what it says about this; if it did separate it, it would no longer be partless. But the separation of the "I" from what it thinks is the separation of a subject from the object. Thus, he has brought up the subject/object distinction as well.

Lines 32–34 are particularly difficult. Why should the partless, if it were to speak itself, first have to say what it is not? And what does Plotinus mean by saying that it would have to be many in this way also in order to be one? I am not overly confident about this, but the following interpretation seems to make some sense of the remark and helps explain the subsequent lines.

To "speak," i.e., (here) to think, at all involves a demarcation, setting the object of thought apart from other things; hence, to speak oneself involves demarcating what one is from what one is not. Thus, the very act of thinking what one is, is also an act of thinking what one is not. Therefore, a thinker who is "speaking itself" has a complex

5 V.3.10, 31–44: εἰ γὰρ ἐνὶ καὶ ἀμερεῖ προσβάλλοι, ἡλογήθη· τί γὰρ ἂν ἔχοι περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰπεῖν, ἢ τί συνεῖναι; καὶ γὰρ εἰ τὸ ἀμερὲς πάντη εἰπεῖν αὐτὸν δέοι, δεῖ πρότερον λέγειν ἂ μὴ ἔστιν· ὥστε καὶ οὕτως πολλὰ ἂν εἶναι, ἵνα ἐν εἴῃ. εἰθ' ὅταν λέγῃ «εἰμὶ τόδε» τὸ «τόδε» εἰ μὲν ἕτερόν τι αὐτοῦ ἔρεῖ, ψεύσεται· εἰ δὲ συμβεβηγὸς αὐτῷ, πολλὰ ἔρεῖ ἢ τοῦτο ἔρεῖ «εἰμὶ εἰμὶ» καὶ «ἐγὼ ἐγώ». τί οὖν, εἰ δύο μόνᾳ εἴῃ καὶ λέγοι «ἐγὼ καὶ τοῦτο»; ἢ ἀνάγκη πόλλ' ἤδη εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ ὡς ἕτερα καὶ ὄπη ἕτερα καὶ ἀριθμὸς ἤδη καὶ πολλὰ ἄλλα. δεῖ τοίνυν τὸ νοοῦν ἕτερον καὶ ἕτερον λαβεῖν καὶ τὸ νοούμενον κατανοούμενον ὄν ποικίλον εἶναι· ἢ οὐκ ἔσται νόησις αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ θίξις καὶ οἶον ἐπαφή μόνον ἄρρητος καὶ ἀνόητος, προνοοῦσα οὐπω νοῦ γεγονότος καὶ τοῦ θιγγάνοντος οὐ νοοῦντος.

mind in the sense that it thinks at least two things, what it itself is and what it is not. On the presupposition that this thinker really is “speaking itself” and that it really is partless, the implication that it must also think what it is not shows that it nevertheless is complex and, hence, not partless after all.

This may look suspect as an argument. Why should the complexity of the thought involving a partless object and its negation implicate the partless object as such in its complexity? Couldn't the object remain simple though the thought of it is necessarily complex? Plotinus might raise two objections against the view behind this question. (a) If the object is in itself simple but the thought of it necessarily complex, the thought doesn't represent the object as it is—it falls short of its object. (b) Even more importantly, since the thought in question is self-thinking, “speaking oneself,” as he puts it here, he could argue that, if the self-thought of the partless object is necessarily complex, the object itself cannot be simple. For if it really was itself which contained a complex thought in order to think itself, however simple and partless it itself appeared in that thought, its thinking is complex. And if this thinking really is its thinking of itself, it itself is complex.

However, what about the other point, that a partless object would have to be many in this way in order to be one? I must confess that here I am somewhat at a loss. This is not so much because the sentence makes no sense in itself as because it is open to several interpretations and the context does not help to decide among them. But perhaps this is what Plotinus is getting at: the unity of a thinker, who thinks itself, somehow consists in its subject and object aspects making up just one thing. In order for a subject of thought to be one with its object, it must think this object; but if it is to do so, it must also think what its object is not—this lies in the nature of thinking. And if the object is it itself, it must think what it itself is not in order to think itself at all since this brings about the kind of complexity involved in a thing and its negation. Thus, complexity is a presupposition of the thought which unifies the subject which thinks itself with its object, i.e. itself. This is what I tentatively make out of the lines quoted above.

In any case, we see in the passage that self-thinking (the phrase “speaking oneself” used here is equivalent with “thinking oneself”) is fleshed out as thinking something of oneself in the first-person. Plotinus doesn't say here that self-thinking always takes that form. The fact that he immediately moves from “the partless speaking itself” to giving first-person reports about what is “said” when something speaks itself, however, suggests that he conceives of “speaking oneself” or “thinking oneself” as consisting of first-person statements about what one is.

There is another first-person passage in V.3.13. The context here is the need of that which is not wholly self-sufficient for thinking itself. Intellect, as opposed to the One which is wholly self-sufficient, is an entity in just such need. In thinking itself, however, Intellect becomes multiple. The reason Plotinus induces for this appears in the following passage:

For consciousness (συναίσθησις) of anything is a perception (αἴσθησις) of something multiple, as the term itself bears witness to. And the thought which is prior turns inward to [the intellect] itself⁶ which is obviously multiple. For even if it only says just this, “I am being” (ὄν εἰμι), it says it as a discovery and plausibly, for being is multiple: since if it concentrated its gaze (ἐπιβάλλη) as if on something simple and said “I am,” it would attain neither itself nor being.⁷ (V.3.13, 21–27)

From the preceding lines, it is clear that the word συναίσθησις (“consciousness”) here replaces “thinking oneself” in the preceding discussion. It is as if Intellect’s turning to itself in order to discover itself leads to the thought “I am.” Thus, again, Intellect’s self-thought is represented as a first-person statement about what the subject or thinker of Intellect’s thought is. As noted above, the passage aims at establishing the plurality of Intellect’s self-thought. A question that arises is exactly how this is established. Is it merely because being as such is multiple (cf. 27–36, the lines following the quotation) or also because even the thought “I am” (or “I am being”) is complex because it involves both an “I,” the subject, and its being, its object? In the passage from chapter 10 of the same treatise, which we discussed above, the mere duality of “I” and “this” suffices to render what “speaks itself” multiple. We may assume that Plotinus is making the same point here: Intellect thinks “I am,” and, in so thinking, it shows itself to be complex, consisting in a subject that thinks and an object that is being thought by this subject. This shows being itself to be multiple. For if the subject had “concentrated its gaze” on an undifferentiated being, it would not have managed to think a thought and surely not discovered itself. In order to discover itself and being, it must think the complex thought of “I am being.”

The remark in V.3.13, 21–27 that if Intellect only says “I am being,” “it says it as a discovery and plausibly, for being is multiple”—is somewhat surprising, not to say disconcerting. Plotinus normally stresses that Intellect doesn’t have to search for and discover its knowledge. Therefore, the word “discover” is not a part of the regular vocabulary for Intellect. That sort of thing belongs to discursive reason but Intellect is non-discursive and possesses all its content all along. Likewise, the word “plausibly” (εἰκότως) is not something commonly said of Intellect since its thought is better than merely “plausible.” However, when the issue is the contrast between the One and

6 I understand τὸν νοῦν (“the intellect”) as implied after αὐτόν (“itself”). See H–S² (=Henry & Schwyzer’s OCT edition of the *Enneads*) note *ad locum*.

7 V.3.13, 21–27: ἐπεὶ καὶ ἡ συναίσθησις πολλοῦ τινος αἴσθησις ἐστὶ καὶ μαρτυρεῖ καὶ τοῦνομα. καὶ ἡ νόησις προτέρα οὕσα εἶσω εἰς αὐτὸν ἐπιστρέφει δηλονότι πολὺν ὄντα· καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν αὐτὸ τοῦτο μόνον εἴπη «ὄν εἰμι», ὡς ἐξευρών λέγει καὶ εἰκότως λέγει, τὸ γὰρ ὄν πολὺ ἐστὶν· ἐπεὶ, ὅταν ὡς εἰς ἅπλοτον ἐπιβάλλη καὶ εἴπη «ὄν εἰμι», οὐκ ἔτυγεν οὔτε αὐτοῦ οὔτε τοῦ ὄντος.

Intellect, as it is in fact here, Plotinus may use of Intellect the kind of language that suggests imperfection. When the contrast is not between non-discursive and discursive thought, but rather between non-discursive thought and the complete self-sufficiency of the Good, Plotinus may employ the language of search to characterize Intellect (cf. V.3.10, 50). And, as he puts it in the lines just before this passage: “what is self-sufficient in the second degree [i.e., Intellect], but needs itself, this is what needs to think itself” (V.3.13, 18–19). Intellect has to think itself in order to become itself. If we relate the “discovery” to this aspect of Plotinus’ thought, we can see it as referring to this gaining of self, which Intellect (or rather Intellect’s precursor, the proto-intellect) had not achieved. But no-one gains what he already has or discovers what he already knows. Hence, the “discovery,” as Plotinus indicates there involves genuinely two different notions, “I” and “being” that are found to be identical. Understood in this way, the remark may give further support to my interpretation of the passage as a whole in the preceding paragraph, that is that being’s multiplicity is ultimately derived from the complexity of “I am being.”

So far, we have seen two instances of self-thinking being presented as first-person thinking in Plotinus. That self-thinking is essentially first-person thinking seems to be confirmed by the third of these first-person passages. Since it is of great importance for the conception of self-thinking that I am after, I shall go into it in some detail. Plotinus is in that passage considering an objection to his conception of the One as something beyond thought and even beyond self-thinking or self-knowledge: some people may think that the One cannot be worth very much, if it doesn’t have self-perception or self-awareness.⁸ He lets such an objector have the word in the first question, which he then responds to:

But who is going to accept a nature that is not in a state of perception or awareness of itself?—What then will it [the Good] be aware of?—Of “I am?”—But it *is* not.—Why then will it not say “I am the Good?”⁹—Again, it will be predicating the “is” of itself. But it will say “good” only with some addition. For one could think “good” without “is,” if one did not predicate it of something else. But he who thinks that he is good will certainly think “I am the Good.” If

- 8 “Perception of oneself” (αἰσθησις ἑαυτοῦ) and “awareness of oneself” (γνώσις ἑαυτοῦ) are in such contexts equivalent to “thinking (of) oneself” (νόησις ἑαυτοῦ); cf. the shift to νοεῖν and νόησις in the passage quoted.
- 9 Or possibly: “I am Good.” The sentence reads: διὰ τί οὖν οὐκ ἐρεῖ τὸ ἀγαθόν εἰμι. The question is whether to put a quotation mark before or after the article τὸ. Elsewhere in this passage, the definite article often clearly functions as a kind of quotation mark prefixed to sentences or words that the One is imagined to think. If so, the thought quoted is only “I am Good.”

not, it does indeed think “Good,” but the thought that it itself is this will not be present to it. So the thought must be “I am Good.”¹⁰ (VI.7.38, 10–18)

Plotinus is here carrying out an imaginary discussion with someone who insists that the Good (the One) must have self-knowledge (self-thinking).¹¹ It is already established in the preceding lines of the chapter that being, an “is,” cannot pertain to the Good. Now he argues that the Good does not have self-knowledge. The argument goes as follows: if the Good has self-knowledge (self-thought, self-awareness), this self-knowledge involves being, involves an “is.” Although it is indeed possible to think “Good” in isolation (without any “addition”), i.e., without predicating it of anything, this would not constitute its self-knowledge, because it will fail to know that it itself is this Good that it thinks. Thus, its self-knowledge must consist in the thought “I am Good.”

This passage is, of course, explicitly about the Good (the One), something which does not think itself, and is not about Intellect. It is, however, revealing for our purposes on account of what it says about what the One would say *if* it had perception of itself, knowledge of itself or thought of itself, i.e., if the One had those crucial features the Intellect has and the objector misses in the One. Therefore, we can use the passage to clarify Plotinus’ conception of the self-thinking of Intellect. To put it succinctly, the self-knowledge here denied of the One, is without doubt just the kind of self-knowledge insisted on for Intellect.

Plotinus’ demand that “the thought that it itself is the Good” must be present to the Good, if it were to have self-knowledge, is quite telling. It shows that he conceives of the self-thought as including the awareness that the subject of the thought is what the thought portrays. Hence, according to this passage, nothing could “think itself” in the relevant sense without it being the case that the subject of the thought conceives of itself as the object of the thought; which in itself suffices to make its thought complex.¹²

10 VI.7.38, 10–18: ἀλλὰ τίς παραδέξεται φύσιν οὐκ οὔσαν (ἐν) αἰσθήσει καὶ γνώσει αὐτῆς; τί οὖν γνώσεται; «ἐγὼ εἶμι»; ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔστι. διὰ τί οὖν οὐκ ἐρεῖ τὸ «ἀγαθὸν εἶμι»; ἢ πάλιν τὸ «ἔστι» κατηγορήσει αὐτοῦ. ἀλλὰ «τὸ ἀγαθὸν» μόνον ἐρεῖ τι προσθεῖς: «ἀγαθὸν» μὲν γὰρ νοήσειεν ἄν τις ἄνευ τοῦ «ἔστιν», εἰ μὴ κατ’ ἄλλου κατηγοροῦ: ὁ δὲ αὐτὸ νοῶν ὅτι ἀγαθὸν πάντως νοήσει τὸ «ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ ἀγαθόν»: εἰ δὲ μή, ἀγαθὸν μὲν νοήσει, οὐ παρέσται δὲ αὐτῷ τὸ ὅτι αὐτός ἐστι τοῦτο νοεῖν. δεῖ οὖν τὴν νόησιν εἶναι, ὅτι «ἀγαθὸν εἶμι».

11 As opposed to Hadot (1988), who also divides the text of his translation into the objector’s statements and Plotinus’ responses, I assume what starts with “Again, ...” to the end of the passage belongs to Plotinus’ response. This makes a better sense. It must be Plotinus who insists that, if there is thought, there is being, and that the Good can have no part in this. It is also he who insists that, if the thought is merely of “Good” in isolation, it fails to be self-thought, and that if the Good has self-thought at all, its thought would involve being. Why should the objector bring this up? The opponent’s point is that the Good has self-thought, not that its thought involves being, which, at this stage, would beg the question against Plotinus.

12 In a very interesting article, Gerson deals with some of the same issues as I address in

Thus, this passage confirms what V.3.10 and 13 may suggest, namely that if we were to render discursively the so-called self-thinking of Intellect, it would be appropriate to do so by statements in the first-person that say what the Intellect is: “I am F” would be the characteristic form (allowing that “F” may hide further complexities). “I am being” would, however, naturally be the first thought (in some logical rather than conceptual sense of “first” since we are dealing with atemporal entities). This is so because being is one of the five most comprehensive of the Forms in Plotinus’ universe, which he sees as the natural first object of thought: before Intellect thinks anything else, it must think that it is. I shall, though very briefly, return to this topic towards the end of this article. I take it that such statements as “I am F” define Intellect, i.e., by thinking them, Intellect is defining itself.

I insert the qualification, “if we were to report discursively,” because it is not so clear that Intellect’s non-discursive thought is by means of statements or propositions. There has been an interesting scholarly debate about the point of whether Intellect’s thought is propositional or not.¹³ I myself have elsewhere come to the conclusion that probably it is not propositional.¹⁴ In this paper I shall, however, ignore the additional complexities the non-propositional nature of Intellect’s thought may hide, as indeed Plotinus often does himself. In any case, I take it that the foregoing shows that we have fairly clear evidence for the claim that Plotinus actually thought of first-person statements, which say what the subject is, as appropriate to describe Intellect’s thought discursively, however inadequate any sort of propositional account of its thought may be.

Before we proceed any further, let us consider the significance of the use of the first-person in such contexts. By using the first-person in combination with the reflexive pronoun “himself” or “herself,” a speaker not only refers to what in fact happens to

this section. I think that, in important respects, he and I are on the same track. The idea that Plotinus’ self-thinking is somehow essentially reflexive is generally accepted. There are very significant differences in how Gerson and I conceive of this, however. Gerson’s central point is that self-thinking in Plotinus consists in reflexivity, which he understands as infallible knowledge of one’s occurrent epistemic states; see Gerson (1997) 160–163. Thus, he connects self-thinking to Plotinus’ claim that, in thinking, the Intellect thinks that it thinks (cf. II.9.1). As I see the matter, knowing that one knows or thinking that one thinks is not sufficient for the kind of self-thinking Plotinus is after. I may think that $5 + 7 = 12$ and I may, *ipso facto*, think that I think this thought. Thus, there is, or may be, some sort of reflexive knowledge involved in having this very thought. But even if thinking this thought should thus carry with it awareness of the thought, it doesn’t follow that the subject thinks that it itself is the truth that $5 + 7 = 12$. The kind of self-knowledge Plotinus envisages for Intellect, on the other hand, is such that it is an integral aspect of its thought that it is about itself.

13 See Lloyd (1969–1970), Sorabji (1982), Sorabji (1983), Lloyd (1986) and Alfino (1988).

14 See Emilsson (2003).

be himself or herself, but implies that he takes himself to be talking about himself.¹⁵ By contrast, a speaker who refers to himself in the third person does not imply this. Odysseus, having become Simo Knuutila through a series of reincarnations, may know (by reading the Myth of Er at the end of Plato's *Republic*, for instance) that Odysseus chose wisely from among the life-sketches available to him on the plain yonder, even if, after having drunk from Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, he may not know that he is Odysseus. On the other hand, if he afterwards reported "I chose wisely," he would thereby imply that he, the speaker, knows that he himself was that person who chose wisely. If such an implication is to be understood in the third person case, the additional premise that the speaker knows that he is the one referred to in the third person is required. (More realistic versions of the philosophical point of this story are available: "John Smith woke up in the hospital, read in a newspaper about a 35 years old passenger, who was seriously injured in the terrorist attack" and so forth.) The fact that Plotinus uses the first-person shows that Intellect, in thinking itself, not only thinks what is the case about it, or even not only what in fact is identical with it, but that it actually knows that it is to itself that what it thinks applies. The third first-person-passage examined, the one from VI.7.38, confirms that Plotinus indeed understands the phrase "thinking oneself" as having such an implication. Thus, Intellect is thinking what it is in such a way that it knows itself to be what it thinks. Actually, not only does it know this, the very thought it has is a thought whereby it consciously defines itself.

Someone might suppose that I was unnecessarily careless in the way I put things at the end of the preceding paragraph: Why does Intellect have to *know* itself to be what it thinks? Wouldn't it be more accurate to say that the use of the first-person shows that it *believes* itself to be that which it thinks? The answer is that, in the ordinary human case, the latter might be the appropriate formulation. In Intellect's case, however, there is no external reality for its thought to match. There is no chance of getting things wrong. Here, it holds that if Intellect thinks it, then so it is! And if it knows what it is thinking about itself, it knows that this is the case. Hence, formulations in terms of knowing rather than believing seem to be quite appropriate here.

With the preceding in mind, let us consider yet another passage, this time from II.9. (33)—the treatise Porphyry gave the title "Against the Gnostics."¹⁶ The first chapter of this treatise has quite rightly been taken to be an important source on Plotinus' views on self-reflexivity.¹⁷ Here he considers and rejects views on the intellect, held by

15 As Anscombe (1975) has shown, this is tied to a specific use of the reflexive pronoun that is intimately tied to the first-person.

16 This treatise forms a part of a whole consisting of III.8, V.8, V.5 and II.9, which apparently were originally written as a single treatise. Their division and titles are the work of Porphyry, Plotinus' student and editor.

17 See Gerson (1997) in note 12 above.

some unnamed thinkers, according to whom there is a marked distinction between a thought and the thought that one thinks the former thought. Apparently, some of the philosophers he is taking issue with here would take this distinction to the extreme of positing two intellects, one that thinks, and another one that thinks that the first intellect thinks (33–34).¹⁸ Plotinus refutes this strong doctrine and then considers a weaker one along the same lines, which holds that thinking and thinking that one thinks are different notions (41). That is to say, assuming that Plotinus’ rendering of this position is correct, “thinking” and “the thought that one thinks” notionally differ in such a way that the notion of thinking as such does not include the consciousness that one thinks (μη παρακαλοῦσθαι ... ὅτι νοεῖ (43)). He then proceeds to refute this, too. The first consideration he advances against this view is that it doesn’t even hold for us “who always watch over our impulses and discursive thoughts” (44) in our everyday lives. The implication seems to be that these mundane states normally include a consciousness of one being in these states. He then proceeds to the case of Intellect, saying:

But certainly when the true Intellect thinks itself in its thoughts and its object of thought does not come from the outside, but it is itself also its object of thought, it necessarily, in its thinking, possesses itself and sees itself: It sees itself not as without intelligence (οὐκ ἀνοηταίνοντα) but sees itself as thinking. So that in its primary thinking it would also have the thinking that it thinks as one being; and it isn’t double, even notionally, there in the intelligible world. Thus, that in its primary thinking it would have also the thinking that it thinks, as one being, and it is not double even notionally.¹⁹ (II.9.1, 46–52)

I find these lines extremely interesting. To begin, note that the thought in question here is evidently the kind of thought Plotinus often refers to as self-thinking (cf. “is itself also its object of thought”). First, he postulates that, in Intellect’s thought, the object does not come from outside and that, in thinking, Intellect “sees itself.” In other words, what it sees is something internal to itself, not an external object. So far, this may suggest only an “Aristotelian” kind of reasoning that bases self-thinking merely on the identity of the thinker and the object. The way he proceeds to account for how the

18 See Armstrong’s (1960) note *ad locum*. Dodds speculates (1963) that Numenius (cf. fr. 22 Desplaces = Proclus, *In Tim.* III, p. 103, 28–31 Diehl) is the source of the idea of two intellects where the one thinks and the other one thinks that the former thinks. I agree with Armstrong that the passage is too obscure to make anything out of it in this direction.

19 II.9.1, 46–52: ὅταν δὲ διή ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἀληθινὸς ἐν ταῖς νοήσεσιν αὐτὸν νοῆι καὶ μὴ ἔξωθεν ἢ τὸ νοητὸν αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ἢ καὶ τὸ νοητόν, ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐν τῷ νοεῖν ἔχει ἑαυτὸν καὶ ὄρα ἑαυτόν· ὄρων δ’ ἑαυτὸν οὐκ ἀνοηταίνοντα, ἀλλὰ νοοῦντα ὄρα. ὥστε ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ νοεῖν ἔχει ἂν καὶ τὸ νοεῖν ὅτι νοεῖ ὡς ἐν ὄν· καὶ οὐδὲ τῆ ἐπινοία ἐκεῖ διπλοῦν.

object appears to the subject, however, indicates that he has something more in mind: the object, which already is said to be Intellect itself, is seen not as something void of thought but it “sees itself as thinking.” In other words, it is the object of thought that is seen as thinking here. In an “Aristotelian interpretation,” this would render Plotinus’ thought rather mystical: if Intellect thinks of itself not *per se* but merely in virtue of the object of thought being identical with the subject, why should this object be seen as thinking? If Intellect thinks, e.g., Beauty itself or a mathematical truth, these objects are readily seen to be thoughts on the “Aristotelian” model. But that they should be seen as thinking something, doesn’t have any meaning.

Let us test the hypothesis proposed above, i.e., that Intellect’s self-thinking, discursively rendered, has the form “I am F.” Let us see how this would match the present passage. One whose thought is “I am F,” may readily be said to see himself thinking. The object of the thought is “I am F” or “I being F”; but this object is the very thought “I am F”; hence, in having this thought, the thinker will be aware of himself thinking himself F. He will be aware of himself being (thinking that he is) F. That this is so follows from the the first-person, self-directed character of the thought in question. Consider, by contrast, the supposition that Intellect thought something like “Justice is beautiful.” Plotinus indeed thinks, and plausibly so, that anyone who has a thought of this sort will be aware of having it or at least can attend to it. That this should be so, however, does not follow from the very content of the thought as the I’s being aware of having the thought “I am F” follows from the the very content of that thought.

In other words, I am suggesting that expressions of the sort “sees itself as thinking” as we have here in II.9.1, are intended to capture both what I have called the first-person character of Intellect’s thought and its self-directed character. We are here faced with a self-identification of the thinker. Thus, I tend to agree with Plotinus that, in the case of the kind of thought in question, there is no room for even a notional distinction between thinking and thinking that one thinks (being aware of what one thinks).

3

I wish now to turn to something seemingly quite different from what we have been focusing on so far. As is well known, Plotinus’ first principle, the One or the Good, is absolutely and in every respect unitary and simple. Intellect is the next stage after the One. It is also characterized by a very high degree of unity, although it falls short of the One in this respect. In fact, there is reason to believe that Plotinus wishes Intellect to be so unified that, if it were to become more so, it would collapse into the One. The different hypostases and stages in the Plotinian hierarchy of being are identified by a characteristic degree of unity. It is clearly Plotinus’ intention not to leave out any possible degree of unity. Thus, Intellect must, in his view, possess the second highest degree of unity possible.

Given this, it may be somewhat surprising that, in the Intellect, there appear two kinds of plurality or otherness that seem to be quite different. This is the duality of the subject and the object of thought, and the plurality within the object that we touched upon in connection with V.3.10 above. What we seem to have is a notion of thought which can be described as triadic in the following way: “Thinking X” is A’s, a thinker’s, thought of something differentiated, BC. Thus, “A thinks BC.” There is a difference (“otherness”) between A and its object BC, and there is a difference (“otherness”) between B and C.

If the two kinds of plurality are really independent, we are left with the impression that “otherness” is of two radically different kinds and plays two different roles. A subject’s being other than its object is a quite different thing from otherness within the object. Moreover, if they are independent, it is natural to ask if Intellect wouldn’t have been even more unified if it had possessed only one of them. But if they are not independent, how are they related? Is either kind prior?

It strikes me that the first-person hypothesis is highly relevant to these questions. Let us suppose, along with Plotinus, that self-thinking is the primary kind of thought. It being primary means, I take it, that it comes first among thoughts in the process from the One downwards. Given Plotinus’ usual way of looking at things, this also means that it is the most complete and unitary kind of thought. Now, the proposal was that “thinking oneself” is to be interpreted as thinking “I am F.” Moreover, it is thinking that one is F in such a way that one’s being F is constituted by this thought. There is no prior fact of one’s being F that the thought expresses. The thought “I am F” is complex: what is being thought is the complex state of affairs that consists in (the thought of) the subject’s being F. It is also complex in the sense of involving a subject/object distinction, namely the distinction implicit in the statement between the thinking subject “I” and its thought about itself that it is F. Thus, the thought “I am F” involves both kinds of otherness, which, in a sense, coincide in its case. That is to say, that which makes what is thought of complex is the very difference between the subject and what it thinks it is.

Thus, the primary kind of thought involves both kinds of otherness. This may sound like good news, for if the primary thought has both features, secondary thoughts will possess them both as well. Indeed, according to Plotinus, they do possess them. They, however, do so in a less unified way than Intellect’s self-thought does in that, when thought is no longer self-thought, the subject of the thought is something different from the object, an object which, however, is bound to be complex in its own right. I won’t pursue the issue here but Plotinus would no doubt hold that a thought of the form “A thinks BC” is more complex than a thought of the form “A thinks AB.”

Several questions and objections may be raised against the present proposal. Someone may wonder, for instance, whether the notion of self-thinking, as I construe it, isn’t quite trivial. Doesn’t the thesis that in apprehending its object Intellect also apprehends

itself, rely on a Kantian intuition to the effect that any apprehension is reflexive, that in thinking whatever one is or may become aware of oneself in one's own thought act?²⁰ That is to say, whoever at any time has any thought about anything whatsoever can also become or—at the same time be—aware of himself having that thought. If so, any thought seems trivially to become a self-thought, which is a view Plotinus evidently does not hold. Plotinus indeed believes that, in Intellect's self-thought, the thinker is aware of itself thinking what it is: since it itself is one element in the content of the thought, an element which together with what it thinks it is, being, makes the thought complex. This, however, does not rely on a tacit appeal to the reflexivity of all thought. Intellect's thoughts are specifically its thoughts about what it itself is, not its thoughts about whatever (which it apparently doesn't have either; it is rather egocentric in its thoughts).²¹ As was argued above, the reflexivity of Intellect's thought follows from the very conception Plotinus has of self-thinking, not the other way around.

Another question that arises is how the full diversity of Intellect, which comprises the whole realm of Platonic Forms, can be derived from the original plurality involved in Intellect's self-thought. If original plurality is the plurality present in the thought "I am being," how does the intelligible realm acquire more plurality as it evidently does? Plotinus' answer to this question is obscure in several respects. The following, however, indicates how he seems to want to proceed. He takes the five "greatest" ("very great") "kinds" (μέγιστα γένη) from Plato's *Sophist*,²² being, identity, difference, motion and rest, to be the highest Forms. They are coextensive and each presupposes the others. They are all involved in the simple thought "I am being." Being is there as the object of the thought, difference as the duality of subject and object or as the diversity of the object, identity in the identity of the subject and being, motion (understood very much as an Aristotelian ἐνέργεια, activity) is represented in the act of thought, and rest is supposed to be involved in this motion's coming to a halt at a determinate object.²³ That the distinction between thinker and object of thought entails the distinction between these forms is, in fact, explicit in VI.2.7–9, the fullest account of the "greatest kinds" as the highest genera of the intelligible realm.²⁴ The rest of the intelligible world is supposed to be derived from these five highest Forms, but Plotinus says little about the details of this process.

20 Cf. Kant's famous remark: "Das: 'Ich denke' muß alle meinen Vorstellungen begleiten können" (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft* B 51).

21 See note 12 above.

22 When Plato uses the expression Μέγιστα ... τῶν γενῶν in *Soph.* 254d, he need not mean that he regards these as the greatest kinds, probably he only means to say that they are very great.

23 For an account of Plotinus' interpretation of the "greatest kinds" see Charrue (1978) 206–223, Brisson (1991) and Santa Cruz (1997).

24 The "greatest kinds" or some subset thereof appear in several other passages, e.g., II.2.6, 1–3; III.7.3, 9–11; VI.6.9, 3 ff.; V.I.4, 34; VI.7.13, 4 ff.

It is time to see the conclusions so far from a wider perspective. As noted at the outset, Intellect is not Plotinus' first principle. Above it is the One or the Good, which not only surpasses Intellect in simplicity and perfection, but it is also its cause. The manner of the causation is usually described by means of emanation metaphors, e.g., as "overflow" or "illumination." The One's first product, first emanation, if you wish, is the proto-intellect touched upon above. This proto-intellect is sometimes described as "sight not yet seeing." That is to say, it is not yet an actual thinker. Having left the One and, hence, no longer being completely simple and perfect, this proto-intellect feels a certain yearning for that which is so, i.e., its source. Hence, it seeks to "see" the One. The One, however, being totally free from all plurality and determination, is not a possible object of intellectual vision. Therefore, the One, as it is in itself, cannot appear in Intellect's vision. What does appear is a mere image of the One and this is Intellect itself. This means that the proto-intellect turns into an actual intellect, i.e., Intellect, when it thinks itself, defines itself. That act, however, is at the same time a failed attempt to see the One. Instead of actually thinking of the One (which is impossible), Intellect thinks something like "I am being," which it "subsequently" spells out in greater detail. In so doing, it knows itself and at the same time defines the things that are.

It is true that these thoughts of Intellect are not representations of anything previously existing. This may leave us with the impression that Intellect is a supremely free creator who, in the manner of a Sartrean hero, creates itself. This, however, would give a highly misleading picture of Plotinus' views. Even if the thoughts in question are not representations of anything external, they are not undetermined by everything external. The One is a kind of external object of Intellect's thought. Even if the thought doesn't represent the One as it is in itself, Plotinus evidently conceives of the thought as eliciting something which was there in the One all along, though not in a distinct and determinate mode. In this sense, Intellect's self-thought is comparable with a person seeking his identity and finding it by eliciting and making explicit something he finds in himself but cannot quite get a hold of because it evades determination.

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JUHA SIHVOLA

The Autonomy of Religion in Ancient Philosophy

1. *Wittgenstein and the Skeptics*

The scattered remarks on religious faith that Ludwig Wittgenstein made here and there in his posthumously published notes have been highly influential in the modern philosophy of religion.¹ The Wittgensteinian view of religion has often been interpreted as a version of fideism, i.e., as a view according to which one is allowed to accept religious beliefs without evidence and proof. Fideism is a position in opposition to evidentialism, i.e., a view according to which one is only allowed to accept beliefs, religious or other, if argumentative evidence can be presented to support them.

It is true that Wittgenstein was a fideist in the sense of not requiring proof and evidence to support religious beliefs. The real novelty of the Wittgensteinian view was, however, not fideism in itself, which has been a rather commonly presented position in the philosophy of religion at least since the 16th century. It was a much more interesting insight of Wittgenstein to interpret religion as an institution autonomous from other aspects of life, especially philosophy and science. Religious beliefs do not need to be justified with a reference to argumentative proofs, but operate on a very different level from all those beliefs that are related to argumentative practices such as science and philosophy. Religion and science are two different language games or forms of life whose principles and contents do not connect at any point. The Wittgensteinian autonomy theory of religion is not only opposed to evidentialism but all theories in which religious beliefs, regardless whether they are accepted on either evidentialist or fideist basis, are integrated to a single view of reality together with philosophical and scientific beliefs.

It is illustrative to compare Wittgenstein's view of the status of religious beliefs to the views of Alvin Plantinga, one of leading figures in modern philosophy of religion and upholder of so-called reformed epistemology. According to Plantinga, the basic religious beliefs, such as the theistic thesis that God exists, cannot be proven with a reference to evidence, but reformed epistemology suggests accepting them as unproven axiomatic foundations of a Christian world-view. Since a world-view necessarily involves unproven axiomatic elements, Plantinga finds the reformed view in which theistic and scientific

1 His most important remarks on religion can be found in the *Vermischte Bemerkungen*.

beliefs are integrated together at least as acceptable as any of its alternatives and holds it as a Christian religious duty to defend it in the clash of ideologies.²

Wittgenstein, on the other hand, thought it is a mistake to mix religious beliefs with science and philosophy, even in the role of axiomatic foundations. The application of evidentialist and argumentative principles damages the true nature of religion as religion. The autonomy of religion also implies that it is possible to be a radical agnostic or even an atheist in one's philosophical and scientific views, while at the same time being committed to religious beliefs and practices.³

Simo Knuuttila and I compared the Wittgensteinian view to the ancient Skeptics' attitude to religion in an article published a few years ago.⁴ We argued that, in Pyrrhonian skepticism, religion can also be regarded as an autonomous institution that does not need any support from outside, and it cannot be justified by the means of dogmatic philosophy. In a way analogous to Wittgenstein's way of thought, Sextus Empiricus maintained that holding any dogmatic positions concerning the existence of the divine tends to have religiously impious results.⁵

We also referred to important differences between Wittgenstein and the Pyrrhonian skeptics. The standard version of Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion cannot easily be termed as skeptical, since it is thought that the notion of God is eliminated from philosophy altogether and only restricted to the particular religious form of life. When one pursues philosophy based on evidentialist principles, one does not even bother to doubt the existence of God but dismisses these kinds of issues as metaphysical. Although a revised version of the Wittgensteinian view, according to which the existence of God is regarded as possible in principle but not provable to this or that direction, can be formulated as a version local skepticism, it is still far away from Sextus and other ancient Pyrrhonian. One who accepts the possibility of the existence of God as a minimal realist assumption of religious language and practice may be termed as a skeptic or an agnostic in religious issues, but she might still accept proofs and evidence in other fields of inquiry. Here she diverges from the ancient Pyrrhonian who did not accept any kinds of proofs in any areas of life. The ancients were global instead of local skeptics.

Knuuttila and I concluded that the comparisons between the ancient skeptics and the modern Wittgensteinians are made problematic by the fact that the Pyrrhonian did not, after all, manage to give a satisfactory account of the difference between the dogmatic and the non-dogmatic life, i.e., between the philosophers' false pretensions to true beliefs, proofs, and justifications, on the one hand, and the skeptical life

2 See, e.g., Plantinga (1982); (2000). Cf. Alston (1989); Wolterstorff (1999).

3 On the reconstruction of the Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion, see Työriö (1984); Phillips (1988).

4 Knuuttila & Sihvola (2000).

5 See especially, Sextus Empiricus, *Pyr.* III 2–12; *Math.* IX 49.

in accordance with everyday observances, on the other. In particular, the notions provided by Sextus and the other ancient skeptics are not too helpful to make the idea of the autonomy of religion comprehensible. Because of its global nature, Pyrrhonian skepticism does not give religion any special position in relation to other areas of life: the skeptic's attitude to religious issues is the same as to everything else. He suspends judgment on everything and lives in accordance with everyday observances in everything he does.⁶

In the light of this conclusion, it might seem that it is not too promising a project to search for ancient roots of autonomy theories of religion. Now I want to argue that the texts of the skeptical philosophers are a mistaken place for this search. The idea of the autonomy of religion can be found elsewhere in ancient philosophy. Without any pretension of comprehensiveness, I shall discuss three different contexts: the Sophists, Aristotle, and the Stoics.

2. *The Sophists*

The origins and nature of religion is one of the most popular themes of the Sophists' discussions in the 5th century BC. The social function of religious beliefs is discussed in an interesting way in a fragment from a satyr play *Sisyphus*, attributed alternatively to the playwright Euripides and Plato's uncle Critias, the notorious leader of the Thirty Tyrants' coup in 404.⁷ The fragment begins with an account of the disorganized and brutish life that human beings led in their early history, a recurrent theme among the sophists. Human life was said to be chaotic because there were no rewards for the good and no punishment for the wicked. Laws were then set up in order to establish justice and hold violence, but this did not prevent human beings from secret wicked deeds. It is then said that at this point "some cunning and wise man invented the fear of gods for mortals so that there might be some terror for the bad, if in secret they do or say or think anything." The wise man introduced the notion of omnipotent and benevolent deity whose mind the evildoers were unable to escape. It was also implied that setting the dwellings of the deities in the celestial orbit along with thunder, lightnings, and starry shape of heaven strengthened fear among mortals. However, the writer of the

6 There are several good overviews of ancient scepticism available, but the discussions on the philosophy of religion are far from satisfying, see, e.g., Burnyeat & Frede (1997), Burnyeat (1983), Bett (2000), Hankinson (1995) and Bailey (2002). On the sceptics and religion, aside from Knuuttila & Sihvola (2000), see Julia Annas, "Ancient Scepticism and Ancient Religion," an unpublished manuscript, originally delivered at the Philosophy in Assos Colloquium, July 2004.

7 Diels & Kranz, II, 88 B 25. On the author of the fragment, see Kahn (1997). An attribution to Euripides is nowadays widely supported over the traditional attribution by Sextus to Critias. The identity of the author is not very important in a philosophical analysis of the contents.

Sisyphus fragment, whoever he was, is also emphatic that this story of gods is not true: "Saying these words he introduced the pleasantest of teachings, hiding truth with a false account."

The *Sisyphus* fragment has often been interpreted as one of the clearest statements of atheism in ancient philosophy.⁸ Perhaps the fact that it has been traditionally attributed to the tyrant Critias has led some commentators see it against the background of the immoralist views Plato attributed to Thrasymachus in the *Republic* and Callicles in the *Gorgias*. These opponents of Socrates hold it as rational for an individual always to follow one's desire to seek one's own interests and dominate others while rejecting the prescriptions of conventional morality.⁹ The *Sisyphus* fragment is said to express extraordinary cynicism when it interprets religious morality as a mere fiction based on lies.¹⁰

It is, however, not quite clear that the *Sisyphus* fragment should be classified among the immoralist criticisms of conventional morality, i.e., to the φύσις side in the 5th century controversy between the upholders of νόμος and φύσις. The writer of the fragment describes the original state of humankind as an undesirable violent chaos, whereas laws, morality, and even religion are understood as having beneficial social function as progressive steps toward civilization. Why could we not see the fragment agreeing with the supporters of νόμος, such as Protagoras and the so-called Anonymous Iamblichī, who considered it preferable to have a society regulated by convention-based laws, morality and religion than to live in a chaos?¹¹

The obvious issue to be addressed is why then did the writer of the *Sisyphus* reveal the establishment of religion as a lie, if it was necessary for maintenance of morality that the human beings believed the story of the gods was true. This is a good question, but it is rather surprising that it has so often been accepted as a kind of discussion-stopper even among modern scholars of ancient philosophy. Many people have just assumed that if one is concerned to reveal the historical basis of a religious tradition as untrue, one is at the same time ready to reject the tradition itself and its moral prescriptions. This is indeed the line of criticism the different types of religious fundamentalism have often taken up against the critical research in exegetics, church history, and sociology of religion. However, it is the crucial point in autonomy theories of religion that to hold something as true in a literary (historical, scientific, philosophical) sense and true in a religious sense are two quite different things. Even though religious stories are regarded as myths and literally untrue, they can very well be understood as supporting human moral motivation and having the same beneficial

8 The classification of Critias among the atheists goes back to Sextus (*Math.* IX 54).

9 On Thrasymachus and Callicles, see, e.g., Annas (1981) and Irwin (1995).

10 Kahn (1997) 262.

11 See Sihvola (1989).

social function that has been ascribed to religion since the antiquity. It is not at least obvious why the writer of the *Sisyphus* could not *both* have thought that religion has a preciously beneficial social function *and* openly express his view that the religious stories are myths, i.e. untrue in a literal sense but perhaps true in a special religious sense.

Instead of speculating on the meaning of the *Sisyphus* fragment, let us look at Protagoras' remarks on religion. There we can find some evidence for a view that religion and ordinary beliefs (including philosophy and science) should be understood as having an autonomous relation to each other.

Protagoras famously began his work *On the Gods* as follows:

Concerning the gods, I am not in the position to know either that they are or that they are not or what they are like in appearance, for there are many things that prevent knowledge, the obscurity of the matter and the brevity of human life.¹²

Although Protagoras was sometimes classified as an atheist even in the antiquity, his formulation does not amount to more than an agnostic position on the existence of the divine.¹³ Even this requires that the Greek ὅς in the sentence should be read as “that,” instead of “how.”¹⁴ Otherwise, even his agnosticism has to be limited to the attributes of the gods, and not extended to their existence.

It is obvious that Protagoras saw no point in referring to the divine in ordinary language and philosophical discussions concerning the world around us. This is also indicated by Plato in the *Theaetetus*, in a passage in which Socrates remarks that Protagoras would definitely reject all references to the divine in the discussion of the *homo mensura* principle, since the sophist has made it absolutely clear that he would refuse to speak or write anything as to their being or not-being.¹⁵

The Protagorean agnosticism did not imply a lack of interest in religious issues.

12 Diels & Kranz, II, 80 B 4.

13 We are reported of a remark by the Epicurean Diogenes of Oenoanda that if Protagoras says that he does not know whether gods exist, this is quite same as saying that he thinks that they do not exist (Diels & Kranz, II, 80 A 23). It seems that for Diogenes, conditional or hesitating belief in the existence of gods is not possible. The logic of religious belief would then be analogous to the word “love”: if you do not know whether you love a person, you obviously do not love that person and in fact you admit that love does not exist in this relation. But does it follow that if you do not know whether gods exist, you do not believe in the existence of gods and accordingly you should admit you think that no gods exist? At least the upholders of autonomy theories of religion disagree.

14 See Kahn (1973); Knuuttila & Hintikka (1986).

15 Plato, *Theaetetus* 162c–e.

It is plausible to assume that the sophist discussed the origins and social function of religious beliefs in *On the Gods*, although the first sentence is all we have preserved in its original form of this work. He is thus joining the writer of the *Sisyphus* and many other Sophists in the study of the sociology of religion.¹⁶ The sophist is also presented as giving an extensive account of these issues in the so-called Great Speech in Plato's *Protagoras*.¹⁷ Whatever we think of the authenticity of its details, the discussion clearly indicates that Protagoras saw the social function of religion as beneficial and religion as an important institution to support social morality. The emergence of civilization is now described in a mythological dressing and in a much more detailed way than in the *Sisyphus* fragment. At the first stage of development the human beings receive fire and the practical arts from Prometheus, but they are not sufficient to maintain an organized society. Therefore, the art of politics has to be bestowed upon humans by Zeus.

The most interesting feature of the sophist's speech is how the human beings are described to apply the divine gifts. Worship and the establishment of altars and images of gods are the very first things that are invented in human societies after the reception of the Promethean gifts. Religion is introduced even earlier than language, which is the next expression of human sociability and precondition for the further development. This is significant because we find a similar idea in the Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion. Wittgenstein, too, thought that religious faith and worship precede language and social virtues in human development. Religion is based on pre-linguistic attitudes: it is not necessary to use words or symbols to be able to worship. One could say that, in the Protagorean and Wittgensteinian view, religion is an expression of the most basic level of human existence, an expression of a share in a divine gift, *θεία μοῖρα*, or kinship with the divine, *τοῦ θεοῦ συγγένεια*.¹⁸

The idea of a pre-linguistic origin of worship also indicates at least some level of autonomy between religion and ordinary beliefs. Religion gives an expression to the basic human sense of existence and some kind of moral and social orientation that is very difficult, if not impossible, to express in a literal or even a symbolic verbal level, not to mention giving arguments to support this attitude. Ordinary and philosophical uses of language operate on a different level. Reference to evidence and proofs is appropriate for normal uses of language but is not applicable to religion.

16 It has sometimes been wondered how a book about the gods could have such an unpromising beginning. See, e.g., Guthrie (1971) 235. It is just the opposite: if one recognizes the difficulty of knowing anything certain about the nature of gods on the basis of reliable evidence, it is more than natural that one is concerned with explaining the wide variety of existing religious beliefs from a sociological viewpoint.

17 Plato, *Protagoras* 320c–328d.

18 Plato, *Protagoras* 322a.

3. *Aristotle and the Stoics*

Wittgenstein, Protagoras, and Sextus can all be classified as agnostics. Agnosticism is, however, not the only position from which an autonomy theory of religion can be presented. Let us now look at Aristotle and the Stoics. The study of divine substance, theology, in Aristotle's own terminology, occupies an important part in so-called first philosophy, the part of philosophy that explores being and substance in general. Aristotle builds up a sophisticated theory of the divine substance in *Metaphysics* XII. It is a substance with purely substantial properties, form, unity, and actuality, without matter, multiplicity or potentiality. The first substance is divine and the name God is used for it. God is not the creator of the universe (which is assumed to be eternal) and does not seem to have any providential functions except as an object of love, attraction and the ultimate final cause of all the movements in the universe. God's mental life is pure intellectual activity, thinking directed exclusively to its own thinking. As the first cause of movement, God has to be an unmoved mover, but Aristotle's texts leave it somewhat ambiguous whether such a mover is immanent in the physical universe or whether it is a transcendent, eternally active being, the perfect nature of which is imitated by the outermost sphere of the universe.¹⁹

The existence of the divine primary substance, the unmoved mover, is not merely an assumption for Aristotle but something that can be proved as necessary through philosophical arguments. The most important proof Aristotle gives for the existence of the unmoved mover is found in *Metaphysics* XII 6. As to the existence of God, Aristotle is an evidentialist in the paradigmatic sense.²⁰

Aristotle's philosophical theology is very far from popular religious beliefs and practices, and the philosopher himself recognizes this clearly. In *Metaphysics* XII he remarks that there is an element of truth about divine matters in popular mythological

19 On Aristotle's metaphysical theology, see Gerson (1990) 82–141; Frede & Charles (2000). On the different possible interpretations of the nature of the first unmoved mover, see Kosman (1994) and Judson (1994).

20 See, *Metaph.* XII 6, 1071b3–1072a18. According to the argument, it is inconceivable that time and movement would be non-eternal, and therefore there has to be at least one movement that is eternal, and this has to be a circular motion. There has to be something to explain the eternal circular motion, and this something has to be a substance, because substances are the primary beings and the existence of everything else is dependent on the primary beings. All substances cannot be non-eternal, because then everything else would also be non-eternal. So there has to be an eternal substance that explains the eternal circular motion. The eternal substance has to be a pure actuality without even having a possibility of not being in activity, because this possibility would be realized sooner or later, and if this happened, there would not be any eternal circular motion. On the background assumptions of the argument, concerning the modal notions, see Hintikka (1973) and Knuuttila (1981).

tradition. The view handed down by the forefathers that the heavenly bodies are divine should in Aristotle's opinion be regarded "as a divinely inspired utterance" (θεῖος ἀν εἰρησθα νομίσειεν). It is like relics preserved until present out of a correct theory of the divine which, like all arts and sciences, has often been developed as far as possible and then again has perished. The rest of the mythological tradition, in which gods are presented in the form of human beings or some other animals, is merely addition, "with a view to the persuasion of the multitude and to its legal and utilitarian expediency."²¹ In other contexts, too, Aristotle presents acute sociological remarks on religious beliefs as projections of moral ideals and social structures. He remarks in *Politics* I that humans do not only ascribe their outside form but also their ways of life to gods; the gods are assumed to have a king because human beings used to be and some of them still are ruled by kings.²²

Although Aristotle's attitude to the popular conceptions of the divine is rather detached, he does not seem to wish to diverge significantly from the conventional practices of Greek religion. The *Nicomachean Ethics* X 6–8, where philosophical contemplation is presented as the exercise of the divine element in us, might seem to imply an idea of a personal contemplative religion.²³ Elsewhere, however, Aristotle's attitude to traditional religious ideas and practices is more or less conformist. In *Politics* VII 8 (1328b2–15) Aristotle enumerates the tasks whose performance he considers necessary for a city. These include tasks related to food, crafts, arms, wealth, and "of first importance," service to the divine, and "most necessary of all," judgment about what is advantageous and just in relationships between the citizens. The list is not assumed to be exhaustive, but the central place ascribed to religion is conspicuous.

The content of an appropriate service to the divine is not explicitly characterized in Aristotle's works, but it is not assumed to involve anything radically conflicting with the Greek tradition. Aristotle recommends in the *Politics* that priesthood should be reserved for the former citizens "who have become weary of their age." This recommendation

21 *Metaph.* XII 8, 1074a38–b14. The idea that arts and sciences as well as political institutions have been discovered many times in the past only to have perished again is a commonplace in Plato and Aristotle, see Plato, *Critias* 109d–110a; *Timaeus* 22b–23c; Aristotle, *Politics* VII 10, 1329b25–28, *On Philosophy*, fr. 8, Ross. Plato and Aristotle shared a view according to which there is a single pattern of cultural development that cyclically repeats over and over again. Aristotle, however, combines the cyclical paradigm with the sophistic model which contrasted the chaotic original state of humankind and the progressive development of civilization. See Sihvola (1989); cf. Cole (1967).

22 *Pol.* I 2, 1252b24–27.

23 See especially *Eth. Nic.* X 7, 1177a15–16. Cf. X 8, 1178b8–22. The chapters on contemplation (X 6–8) and their compatibility with the argument in rest of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are among the most hotly debated passages in the Aristotelian corpus. See, e.g., Cooper (1987), Kraut (1991) and Kenny (1992).

implies that the performance of religious tasks is not particularly demanding, since Aristotle assumed that human mental capacities would decay in the old age, thus diverging from the usual Greek respect for the wisdom of the elderly.²⁴ Religious services seem to consist of following the traditional ceremonies, and it is not necessary to have philosophical acuity to perform them. There is no indication that anthropological myths, criticized by Aristotle as not being based on real philosophical wisdom concerning the divine, should be excluded from religious practices. Religion was not only intended for the illumination of the order of the universe, but also for teaching people to behave in an appropriate way. Aristotle himself seemed to have been happy to follow traditional religious forms in his personal life. This is indicated, for example, by a relatively reliable tradition according to which he left money in his will for setting up statues dedicated to Zeus, Athena, and Demeter.²⁵

Aristotle accepted the traditional religious notions and conceptions as the basis of everyday religious commitments without particular trouble. He did not regard these conceptions as literally true; on the contrary, he took them to be human fabrications that were influenced by anthropomorphic assumptions and expectations of expediency. Religion as a practice was not dependent on a philosophical theory of the divine. He regarded the latter as a central enterprise in philosophy and produced a sophisticated argument to prove the existence of a very special type of divinity, an eternal substance distinct from all perceptible substances, a pure actuality, and an unmoved mover that ultimately explains all movements in the universe as their final cause. Still, the philosophical theory of divinity was not supposed to influence practical religion in any way. For Aristotle, philosophical theology and practical religion are two completely different things.

We can be much briefer with the Stoics. They understood god as an immanent, providential, rational, active principle that is inherent in all matter. In this role it is sometimes identified with nature or fate. Divinity is also located in intellect and reason: god is the mind, intellect or commanding faculty of universal nature.²⁶ Usually it is the active aspect of the universe that is regarded as divine in the Stoic theory, but sometimes divinity is ascribed to the constituent matter of the world.²⁷ The Stoics were, however, also careful to establish that their philosophical view of divinity was in no way

24 Aristotle defined the mental prime of life to be at the age of 49 in the *Rhetoric* (II 14, 1390b9–11), and criticized the Spartans for establishing life-long offices although the human mind grows old (*Politics* II 9, 1270b35–1271a1). Cf. Kraut (1997) 102–103.

25 Diogenes Laertius, V 16. The account of Aristotle's will is generally regarded as authentic, although one should be wary of relying too much on biographical details provided by Diogenes.

26 Aëtius, I.7.33; Diogenes Laertius, VII 135–136, 142.

27 Cicero, *De natura deorum* I 39. Diogenes Laertius, VII 148.

intended to undermine the role of the traditional gods of the Greek pantheon. They interpreted the mythological gods allegorically as symbolizing the immanent deity in its various aspects. Sometimes imaginative but unreliable etymologies are referred to in this context. The Stoics explained the name Zeus as referring to responsibility for life (ζῆν) and its accusative form *Dia* as being the cause of all things (δι' ὄν). The name Athena is given because the commanding faculty of the divinity stretches into aether, and Hera because it stretches into air (ἀήρ). Hephaestus is said to symbolize the activity of the universal commanding faculty in the creative fire, Poseidon in the sea, and Demeter in the earth.²⁸

Even though the Stoics reinterpreted the mythological deities in terms of their philosophical theory, this did not imply any need to reform traditional religion, but its practices could be accepted as they were. It is true that the Pyrrhonian skeptics indirectly criticized other philosophical schools, especially the Stoics, for implying impious consequences as a result of their dogmatic claims about the divine. Sextus remarks that the skeptic will be “safer” than other philosophers, since “in conformity with his ancestral customs and the laws, he declares that the Gods exist, and performs everything which contributes to their worship and veneration, but, so far as regards philosophical investigation, declines to commit himself rashly.”²⁹ The point seems to be that dogmatic philosophy might undermine religion in two ways. A philosophical theory might directly require a revision of traditional beliefs, or if the theory is supposed to support a certain form of religion but then gets refuted by argument, religion, too, loses credibility in the eyes of such a person who requires argumentative support for all of her beliefs.³⁰ However, the skeptic argument only works against the Stoics, if they really had thought that traditional religion needs argumentative support and there is a direct relation between theory and religion. We do not have much evidence that this was their view. The Stoic strategy seems rather to have been to show that popular religion, whatever it is, can be shown to be a vague version of the true philosophical theory of divinity, whatever it is. So both the philosophers and the followers of popular religions can be happy in their autonomous fields of activity. Religious dogmatism is far from Stoicism.

28 Diogenes Laertius, VII 147. There is no systematic modern account of Stoic theology, but see Dragona-Monachou (1976).

29 Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* IX 49.

30 The Academic Cotta outlines this type of argument in Cicero's *De natura deorum* I 15. He argues that if he took up the Stoic assumptions as his starting-points, he would have to conclude that no gods exist at all.

4. Conclusion

Julia Annas argues in her paper “Ancient Skepticism and Ancient Religion” that most ancient philosophers made a distinction between what she calls theological beliefs and religious beliefs.³¹ The former are philosophical theories of divinity involving claims to universal and cross-cultural validity, whereas the latter are beliefs related to the practice of traditional religions, understood as being culturally specific. Annas is not very far from the line of argument presented above, when she claims that, with the exception of Plato, all major ancient philosophers agreed that the position one takes in relation to theological beliefs (whether one subscribes to certain dogmas (δόγματα) or suspends judgment on all of them, as in skepticism), does not have any effect on religious beliefs. In other words, the construction of philosophical theories and commitment to religious beliefs and practices are understood as being autonomous with respect to each other.³²

Annas also makes a strict distinction between ancient pagan polytheism and modern monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). She says the latter differ from ancient religions by assuming that religious beliefs imply theological beliefs and requiring a religious believer to accept specific claims about the existence and nature of God which are taken to be universal and cross-cultural. This is, however, not true, if it means accepting evidentialist natural theology or fideism that is integrated to the general world-view based on philosophy and science.

The idea of at least relative autonomy of religion is, however, quite common in both Jewish and Christian thought. Simo Knuuttila has remarked that it can be even found in Thomas Aquinas. Being a good Aristotelian even in this respect, Aquinas defined religious faith (*fides*) as a theological virtue the propositional contents of which is not assented to on the basis of non-theistic evidence.³³ Religious faith required for him that the believer has a world-view in which there is a place for God and the existence of God can be proved in the light of natural reason for those who doubt it. The religious faith itself is, however, quite distinct from believing that God exists. So there is a relative autonomy between religion and philosophy even here.

Philosophy of religion has not been among the most popular topics among recent studies in ancient philosophy. This might partly be due to the fact that many scholars

³¹ See above, n. 6.

³² Plato diverges from the others. He insists, especially in the *Laws*, that all the citizens in a well-governed state have to share certain specific and determinate theological beliefs which also require a thorough reform of religious practices. A totalitarian regime will then see that public worship is uniform and private worship forbidden. Annas also argues that it is just these features in Plato's thought that commended him to later Jewish and Christian thinkers whose view of the relation of the religious to theological beliefs was entirely different from that of the mainstream pagan philosophy.

³³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 2.

have been modern secular people with little interest in religious issues. Another reason might have been the misleading way of making too strict a distinction between ancient polytheism and the three major monotheistic religions. One can wish that the recognition of the unexplored continuities would increase scholarly interest in the ancient philosophy of religion.

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PART II
MEDIEVAL THOUGHT

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Future Contingents in the Eleventh Century

The problem of future contingents has been a much debated issue in the history of Western philosophy and theology. The eleventh century can hardly be characterized as an illustrious period in this respect, but it certainly deserves a place in the historiography of the theme for the reason that our first witnesses to medieval discussion on the problem derive from that period. It was Boethius (ca. 480–524) who transmitted the Greek discussion about *De interpretatione* 9 to the Latin audience through his two commentaries on Aristotle's treatise. However, it would take almost half a millennium before Boethius's commentaries would have any notable effect. The first pieces of evidence for medieval treatment of the problem can be found in some Italian texts from around the middle of the eleventh century. It is plausible to assume, though, that there was already some discussion in the tenth century.

This article offers an attempt to describe some features of the eleventh-century understanding of the problem of future contingents. As for the contemporary witnesses, the focus will be on the work of three authors of Italian origin, viz. Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Damian and Anselm of Besate. In addition, I shall present some remarks on the Augustinian and Boethian sources and their role in the eleventh-century discussion. The general picture developed in the article is the following. It seems that the eleventh-century thinkers did not find the problem of future contingents, which Aristotle raises in *De interpretatione* 9, particularly interesting.¹ They were far more interested in the problem of divine foreknowledge, which is a distinct but related problem. Their understanding of divine foreknowledge was largely based on their reading of the Augustinian sources, even though there are also some ideas which derive from Boethius's works. They saw the problem of future contingents as an apparent problem that can be dissolved by invoking a distinction between two kinds of necessity.

1 In this article, the expression "the problem of future contingents" is used narrowly to refer to the problem raised by Aristotle in *De interpretatione* 9, particularly as described by Boethius in his two commentaries on this work.

1. *Anselm of Canterbury—Cur Deus homo II 17*

Our most important witness for eleventh-century discussions about future contingents and divine foreknowledge is Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109). In ch. 21 of *De casu diaboli* (from the 1080s) Anselm refers to the problem of divine foreknowledge and free choice as “that very celebrated question,” and it is clear from the remarks presented in this context that there was contemporary debate on the topic. Anselm’s last treatise, *De concordia* (1107–1108), deals with that celebrated question and two other connected issues: the aim of the treatise is to establish the harmony of human free choice with divine foreknowledge, predestination and grace. In *Cur Deus homo* (1098), Anselm’s main work, one of the themes is to inquire into the necessity and freedom of Christ’s action, partially also from the viewpoint of foreknowledge.

In Anselm’s work, there appears to be only one clear reference to the problem of future contingents as distinguished from the problem of divine foreknowledge, in *Cur Deus homo II 17*. The context and nature of the reference are, in my view, very illuminating for the eleventh-century understanding of the problem of future contingents.

To those interested in modalities in medieval thought, *Cur Deus homo II 17* is familiar as a chapter in which Anselm discusses necessity. What is typical of Anselm is that he talks about necessities from the point of view of agents. In the strict sense (*proprie*), “necessity” refers to a causally efficient external constraint that infringes upon the freedom of the agent: there is some factor external to the agent itself that literally compels it to act in a certain particular way. In addition, the word “necessity” can be used in some derivative senses.²

Anselm’s main contribution in *Cur Deus homo II 17* is his distinction between two kinds of necessity, viz. preceding necessity (*necessitas praecedens*) and sequent necessity (*necessitas sequens*). Preceding necessity is described by Anselm as an efficient kind of necessity which is the cause of a thing’s being the case. For example, when the heavens are said to revolve because it is necessary that they revolve, what we have is preceding necessity, since it is the force of their natural state that compels the heavens to revolve. Preceding necessity is equal to, or included in, what Anselm calls necessity in the strict sense. Sequent necessity, for its part, is a harmless kind of necessity that does not efficiently cause anything; instead, it is caused by a thing’s being the case. For example, if a person is speaking, it is necessary that he is speaking, for nothing can make it the case that he is not speaking while he is speaking. Anselm points out that sequent necessity applies to all times or tenses: whatever has been, necessarily has been; whatever is, necessarily is, and necessarily was going to be; whatever will be, necessarily will be.³

2 For Anselm’s ideas about modality, see Serene (1981), Knuuttila (1993) 70–75 and (2004).

3 Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus homo II 17*, ed. Schmitt II, 125, 8–22. See also Anselm of Canterbury, *De concordia I 3*, ed. Schmitt II, 250, 13–251, 2.

Anselm ends his characterization of sequent necessity by presenting the following remark:

This is the necessity which in Aristotle's discussion of singular and future statements appears to destroy "whichever" (*utrumbet*) and prove that everything happens of necessity.⁴

This remark is an explicit reference to the problem of future contingents as discussed by Aristotle in *De interpretatione* 9. Even though the remark has a modest appearance, it proves to be quite pregnant. When Anselm states that the necessity which appears to destroy *utrumbet* is a harmless kind of necessity, he in effect says that the problem of future contingents as presented by Boethius is an apparent problem. In addition, the casual way in which Anselm makes the remark implies he thought his view is in line with what his contemporaries felt about the issue. *Cur Deus homo* II 17 suggests that, in Anselm's time, it was customary to see the problem of future contingents as an apparent problem that can be dissolved by invoking a distinction between two kinds of necessity.

In what follows, I shall attempt to provide a picture into which Anselm's remark in *Cur Deus homo* fits. Let us start by considering Boethius's views about future contingents and divine foreknowledge.

2. Boethius on Future Contingents and Divine Foreknowledge

Boethius discusses the problem of future contingents in his two commentaries on Aristotle's *De interpretatione*. In his *Philosophiae consolatio*, the problem of divine foreknowledge and free choice is a major theme. I shall first briefly describe how Boethius understands the problem of future contingents and what, in his view, is the solution to it, and then turn to the question of divine knowledge.⁵

According to Boethius, some events in the future are genuinely contingent. Such genuinely contingent events are called *utrumbet* ("whichever") because they can turn out either way. The *utrumbet* contain three subclasses: there are those events which derive from human free choice (*liberum arbitrium*), there are those events which come about by chance (*casus*), and there are those based on "possibility" (*possibilitas*).⁶ We

4 *Cur Deus homo* II 17, 125, 20–22: "Haec est illa necessitas quae, ubi tractat ARISTOTELES de propositionibus singularibus et futuris, videtur utrumbet destruere et omnia esse ex necessitate astruere."

5 For discussions about Boethius's views on future contingents, foreknowledge and modalities, see Craig (1988) 79–98, and Knuutila (1993) 45–62.

6 See, e.g., Boethius, *In librum Aristotelis Perihermeneias* I, 105, 28–106, 23, and II, 203, 2–11, and Knuutila (1993) 49–51.

shall leave the two last-mentioned classes aside and concentrate on the question of free choice.

The problem of future contingents, as Boethius describes it in his commentaries on *De interpretatione*, can be rendered as follows. If we think of statements in general, it seems that each of them has a definite truth-value: either it is definitely true, or then it is definitely false. However, it seems that this does not apply to statements about contingent future events. Namely, if a statement is definitely true, then the event that it refers to will be brought about through the force of an immutable necessity, and if it is definitely false, then the event is, in the same way, prevented from taking place. Hence, if the statements about contingent future events were definitely true or false, then the events in question would be brought about through a necessity. As a result, everything happens of necessity, and free choice, chance and possibility perish. To solve the problem, i.e., to save the contingency of the *utrumlibet*, Boethius claims that the statements referring to contingent future events are not definitely true or false but indefinitely so.⁷

What does Boethius mean when he claims that statements about future contingents are not definitely, but indefinitely, true and false? Does he want to say that propositions about future contingents do not (yet) have any truth-value? Or is his point to say that these propositions have their truth-value in some special way? It is not quite clear how we should understand Boethius's position.⁸ From the point of view of understanding the eleventh-century discussion, however, this does not make much difference. To Anselm and his contemporaries, it was clear that the problem of future contingents cannot be solved by drawing a distinction related to the notions of truth and falsehood. God has a perfect knowledge of the future, and therefore the statements about singular future events must be definitely true and definitely false in the same way as statements about the past.

Boethius famously treated the question of divine knowledge in his *Philosophiae consolatio*. It seems to me, however, that his understanding of the matter is not the same as the eleventh-century understanding. As I read *Philosophiae consolatio*, Boethius never abandoned his solution to the problem of future contingents.

7 See, e.g., *In librum Aristotelis Perihermeneias* I, II, 17–28: “Quod si in futurum omnis affirmatio vel negatio definite semper dividunt veritatem et falsitatem, erit rerum quae praedicuntur necessarius eventus et omnia ex necessitate contingent vel non contingent. Itaque et casus et possibilitas et liberum perit arbitrium. Syllogismus autem huiusmodi est: si omnis affirmatio vera est aut falsa definite et eodem modo negatio, eveniet ut omnia inevitabili necessitatis ratione contingant. Quod si hoc est, liberum perit arbitrium. Sed hoc impossibile est. Non igitur verum est omnem adfirmationem vel negationem veram definite esse vel falsam.”

8 See Knuuttila (1993) 55–60 for some discussion.

There is a short discussion about God's knowledge of future events in Boethius's second commentary on *De interpretatione*. Boethius appears to suggest that God knows future events in such a way that the statements about them need not have a definite truth-value: God knows them "contingently, so that he is not unaware that a different event could take place."⁹ Some remarks in *Philosophiae consolatio* suggest that Boethius later became dissatisfied with this kind of approach. He emphasizes there the certainty of divine knowledge, in contrast to human opinion.¹⁰ However, Boethius does not come to the conclusion that he should change his view about future contingents. Instead, he will argue that divine knowledge of the future is not foreknowledge.

Before developing his own solution, Boethius comments on a solution which postulates that foreknowledge does not have any deterministic implications. As we will see, Augustine's solution is of this type. Lady Philosophy compares foreknowledge of future things to the knowledge of present things. If the knowledge of those things which we just see happening in front of our eyes imposes no necessity on those present things, why should foreknowledge of future things impose a necessity on future things? As Lady Philosophy knows, though, Boethius will not be able to accept this solution because he finds it begs the question:

But this, you say [i.e., Boethius says], is exactly what is in doubt, whether there can be any foreknowledge of those things which do not have necessary outcomes. For these two (foreknowledge and not-necessary outcomes) seem to be incompatible, and you think that if things are foreseen, necessity is a consequence, and if there is no necessity, they cannot be foreknown at all.¹¹

In Boethius's view, it is misleading to compare foreknowledge of future events to the knowledge of what is present. He has a very strong intuition that foreknowledge of things has deterministic implications even if knowledge of what is present has not. Because of this intuition, he finds the Augustinian type of solution ineffective.

Boethius's own solution in *Philosophiae consolatio* V 4–6, as is well known, is to argue that divine knowledge of our future is not really foreknowledge but knowledge of what is present. Boethius maintains that knowledge should be viewed, first and foremost, from the point of view of the knowing subject. The subject of divine knowledge, God, is eternal. God's eternity is a timeless existence; he does not have past, present or future but only a timeless present. Therefore, everything which happens in the course of time is timelessly present to God, and his knowledge of it is present knowledge. Some of the things which happen take place of necessity, such as the sunrise, and some are

9 *In librum Aristotelis Perihermeneias* II, 225, 9–226, 25.

10 Boethius, *Philosophiae consolatio* V 3.

11 *Ibid.* V 4; transl. Tester, 409.

voluntary, such as those based on our choices. God's knowledge of things does not affect the status of things as necessary or voluntary any more than our knowledge of what we see in front of us affects the status of what we see. Therefore, God's knowledge of our choices does not affect our freedom.

In his commentaries on *De interpretatione*, Boethius has argued that if statements about future events are definitely true or definitely false, then everything happens of necessity. Towards the end of the discussion in *Philosophiae consolatio* V 6, he again becomes mindful of this idea and has Lady Philosophy speak as follows:

If at this point you [Boethius] were to say that what God sees is going to occur cannot not occur, and that what cannot not occur happens from necessity, and so bind me to this word "necessity," I will admit that this is a matter indeed of the firmest truth, but one which scarcely anyone except a theologian could tackle.¹²

As an answer to this problem, Lady Philosophy draws a distinction between two kinds of necessity:

For there are really two necessities, the one simple, as that it is necessary that all men are mortal; the other conditional, as for example, if you know that someone is walking, it is necessary that he is walking. Whatever anyone knows cannot be otherwise than as it is known, but this conditional necessity by no means carries with it that other simple kind.¹³

Boethius allows us to understand that it is simple necessity which has deterministic consequences whereas conditional necessity is harmless. If we think of future events deriving from human free choice in relation to divine knowledge, they are seen to be conditionally necessary. However, considered in themselves, these events are not under any necessity, not even the conditional necessity:

So therefore we were not wrong in saying that these, if related to the divine knowledge, are necessary, if considered in themselves, are free from the bonds of necessity, just as everything which lies open to the senses, if you relate it to the reason, is universal, if you look at it by itself, is singular.¹⁴

Boethius, then, does not want to ascribe any kind of necessity to contingent future events considered in themselves. He remains consistent in avoiding the idea that there

¹² *Ibid.* V 6; transl. Tester, 429.

¹³ *Ibid.*; transl. Tester, 429.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; transl. Tester, 431.

could be definite foreknowledge of future contingents or that future contingents would be under some necessity. What he says about divine knowledge and the conditional necessity related to it is no exception because divine knowledge is about the timeless present.

To conclude, Boethius takes the problem of future contingents very seriously. In order to avoid determinism, he denies that statements about contingent future events have a definite truth-value. In *Philosophiae consolatio*, he makes an effort to describe God's knowledge of the future in a way which respects this solution to the problem of future contingents. To achieve this, he also makes a distinction between two types of necessity. There are some similar distinctions in Boethius's commentaries on *De interpretatione*.¹⁵

3. Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge and Necessity

Let us now turn to Augustine, who was the most important authority in early medieval theology as far as individual thinkers are concerned. The importance of Augustine's views for the eleventh-century discussions about divine foreknowledge and related issues can be seen, for example, by looking at the source references for *De concordia* in the critical edition of Anselm's works. Augustine's main discussions on free choice and divine foreknowledge can be found in *De libero arbitrio* III 1–4 and *De civitate Dei* V 8–11. I shall comment on the latter discussion which is the more important for this study.¹⁶ Before that, however, two general observations about Augustine's approach are appropriate. First, it is often maintained that Augustine's main contribution to the medieval discussions about future contingents and divine foreknowledge is to be seen in his idea of divine eternity, which was later developed further by Boethius. This may be true. However, it is important to notice that Augustine's own discussions about free choice and divine foreknowledge are not based on the idea of eternity. Second, there is no indication in Augustine's discussions that he was familiar with the problem of future contingents as formulated in *De interpretatione* 9. If Augustine knew of *De interpretatione* 9, it had not made any notable impression on him.

The starting-point for the discussion in *De civitate Dei* V 8–11 is the Stoic doctrine of fate and Cicero's critique of it. Cicero's motive for criticizing this doctrine, according to Augustine, is that of saving human freedom, which, for its part, is the foundation of morality. Cicero thought that there can be no foreknowledge without a determined order of causes, and if there is a determined order of causes, there is no freedom. To

¹⁵ See *In librum Aristotelis Perihermeneias* I, 121, 20–122, 15, and II, 241, 1–9.

¹⁶ For discussions about Augustine's views on foreknowledge and modalities, see Craig (1988) 59–78, and Knuuttila (1993) 66–70.

save human freedom and responsibility, Cicero denied that there could be a determined order of causes or foreknowledge.¹⁷

Augustine rejects Cicero's view as one leading to atheism because a God who does not foreknow the future is no God at all. The Christian solution, according to Augustine, is to refrain from making the choice that Cicero forces upon us and to choose both: "But the God-fearing mind chooses both freedom and foreknowledge. It accepts both and supports both with religious loyalty."¹⁸ "How so?" asks Cicero. Augustine agrees with Cicero that there can be divine foreknowledge only if there is a determined order of causes which God knows. However, he denies that the existence of a determined order of causes, which God knows, would bring it about that the human will could not choose freely. Human wills are free, and they are part of the determined order of causes which God knows.

Moreover, even if there is in God's mind a definite pattern of causation, it does not follow that nothing is left to the free choice of our will. For in fact, our wills also are included in the pattern of causation certainly known to God and embraced in his foreknowledge. For the wills of men are among the causes of the deeds of men, and so he who foresaw the causes of all things cannot have been ignorant of our wills among those causes, since he foresaw that these wills are the causes of our deeds.¹⁹

God's foreknowledge of our free choices does not make our choices less free. Rather one could say that divine foreknowledge guarantees our freedom. If God foreknows that some future event depends on my free choice, then it certainly must depend on it.

In Augustine's view, then, divine foreknowledge and freedom of the will are compatible. They have to be compatible because rejecting either of them would have unacceptable consequences. In his attempt to show how they can be compatible, Augustine does not refer to God's eternity, and he is happy to speak of God's knowledge of the future as "foreknowledge" (instead of speaking of it as "present knowledge" insofar as it is the knowledge possessed by a timeless being). However, in the background of Augustine's discussion, there is one idea which often goes together with the idea of

17 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* V 9.

18 *Ibid.*; transl. Green, 173.

19 *Ibid.*: "Non est autem consequens ut, si Deo certus est omnium ordo causarum, ideo nihil sit in nostrae voluntatis arbitrio. Et ipsae quippe nostrae voluntates in causarum ordine sunt qui certus est Deo eiusque praesentia continetur, quoniam et humanae voluntates humanorum operum causae sunt; atque ita, qui omnes rerum causas praescivit profecto in eis causis etiam nostras voluntates ignorare non potuit, quas nostrorum operum causas esse praescivit." Transl. Green, 175–177.

divine eternity, namely, the idea of divine providence.²⁰ The determined order of causes on which foreknowledge is based can also be called “providence”—at least as far as we are talking about things which are good. If God’s being is timeless, the same seems to apply also to his providence. In the present context, however, Augustine does not refer to the timeless nature of providence. What matters here is that there is a determined order of causes which depends on God and is known by him.

In addition to a solution to the problem of foreknowledge and free choice, *De civitate Dei* V 8–11 contains some other ideas which are relevant for the eleventh-century discussion. Augustine presents some remarks about the ideas of necessity and omnipotence.

To refute the common assumption that divine foreknowledge is accompanied by a kind of necessity which is in conflict with the free choice, Augustine argues in V 10 that no necessity can take away the freedom of the will. There are two senses of the term “necessity” which he finds relevant here. In the first sense, the term “necessity” is used “of what is not in our power, but accomplishes its end even against our will, for example, the necessity of death.” Augustine claims that our will is not under any such necessity, for the will does not will anything against its will. Second, there is “the necessity according to which we say that it is necessary for something to be as it is, or happen as it does” (*necessitas secundum quam dicimus necesse esse ut ita sit aliquid vel ita fiat*). As an example, Augustine mentions that “it is necessary for God to live forever and to foreknow all things.” This necessity, which Craig has characterized as “necessity of essential predication,”²¹ does not, in Augustine’s view, impose any genuine necessity on the agent in question. The will is also under some such necessities, for example, “it is necessary, when we exercise will, to do so of our own free will.” In Augustine’s opinion, it is clear that the truth of such statements does not in anyway infringe on the freedom of the will. The specific example chosen by Augustine aims at showing, on the contrary, that it is an essential characteristic of the will that it is a free power.²²

20 Augustine discusses providence in *De civitate Dei* V 11.

21 Craig (1988) 69–70.

22 *De civitate Dei* V 10: “Si enim necessitas nostra illa dicenda est, quae non est in nostra potestate, sed etiamsi nolimus efficit quod potest, sicut est necessitas mortis, manifestum est voluntates nostras, quibus recte vel perperam vivitur, sub tali necessitate non esse. Multa enim facimus, quae si nollemus, non utique faceremus. Quo primitus pertinet ipsum velle; nam si volumus, est, si nolimus, non est; non enim vellemus, si nollemus. Si autem illa definitur esse necessitas secundum quam dicimus necesse esse ut ita sit aliquid vel ita fiat, nescio cur eam timeamus ne nobis libertatem auferat voluntatis. Neque enim et vitam Dei et praesentiam Dei sub necessitate ponimus, si dicamus necesse esse Deum semper vivere et cuncta praescire ... Sic etiam cum dicimus necesse esse, ut, cum volumus, libero velimus arbitrio: et verum procul dubio dicimus, et non ideo ipsum liberum arbitrium necessitati subicimus, quae adimit libertatem.”

From the eleventh-century viewpoint, this distinction between two senses of necessity is highly interesting. Like Anselm of Canterbury, Augustine approaches necessity from the point of view of the agent, in this case the will. Augustine's first sense of necessity appears to be quite similar to Anselm's preceding necessity or necessity in the strict sense: the question is about causally efficient external constraints. In addition, Augustine's second sense of necessity, the necessity according to which something happens as it does, is obviously related to Anselm's sequent necessity. The examples which Augustine gives are about "necessity of essential predication," but it can be argued that he also has something else in mind. Namely, Augustine's aim in the passage is to show that the kind of necessity which accompanies divine foreknowledge does not take away the will's freedom. In other words, Augustine wants to show that the necessity in the statement "It is necessary for the will to will those things which God foreknows it to will" is a necessity of a harmless kind. Because God foreknows the will to will those things which it will actually will, the statement in question can be reformulated as "It is necessary for the will to will those things which it will actually will." Reformulated this way, the statement exemplifies both Augustine's second sense of necessity and Anselm's sequent necessity. It is true that Augustine does not actually say so, but he is arguably implying something of this sort, or at least it is not difficult to develop what he says in this direction. My contention is that we should deem Augustine's *De civitate Dei* V 10 as a major source of influence for Anselm's distinction between preceding and sequent necessity and for the eleventh-century way of conceptualizing necessity in general.

In the same context, Augustine also presents a remark about divine omnipotence. He argues that God's power is not lessened by the fact that there are certain things he cannot do, for example, he cannot die or be mistaken. On the contrary, it is because God is omnipotent that he cannot do these things, for if he could, he would have less power.²³ Omnipotence was treated very much in the same vein in the eleventh century by Peter Damian and Anselm of Canterbury. Even though similar statements can also be found elsewhere, this is a further piece of evidence for the importance of *De civitate Dei* V 8–11 as a source for the eleventh-century discussion.

4. *The Evolution of the Eleventh-Century View*

It is plausible to think that the eleventh-century understanding of the problem of future contingents evolved from an interplay of Augustinian and Boethian influences. More particularly, my suggestion is that the early reception of *De interpretatione* 9 took place in a framework which contained a basically Augustinian outlook on the question of divine foreknowledge and free choice. To elaborate this idea, I shall first make some

23 *Ibid.*

remarks relating the Augustinian and Boethian approaches to the question of divine foreknowledge, and then turn to the problem of future contingents.

Augustine and Boethius agree about some important issues. They agree that divine knowledge of the future and human free choice have to be compatible because neither of the tenets can be given up. They also agree that God's knowledge of the future should not, strictly speaking, be conceived of as foreknowledge because God's being is timeless. However, there is one very fundamental difference between their ideas. Boethius is convinced that foreknowledge has deterministic implications, and that is why he bases his solution on God's timeless being. Augustine denies that foreknowledge has deterministic implications, and that is why he is happy to speak of God's knowledge of the future as foreknowledge. This fundamental difference becomes apparent if we look at Boethius's idea from the point of view of *De civitate Dei* V 8–11. It is easy to see that Boethius's position is, in important respects, similar to Cicero's view as described by Augustine. Both Cicero and Boethius hold that there can be foreknowledge only if the future is fixed, and if the future is fixed, then there is no free choice but everything happens of necessity. They both solve the problem by denying foreknowledge of those things which depend on free choice, even though they do it in a different way. Cicero simply denies the possibility of foreknowledge of these things whereas Boethius argues that divine knowledge of the future is not foreknowledge but knowledge of what is timelessly present. Augustine, for his part, holds that, even though the future is fixed and everything will happen exactly as it will happen, there is no necessity which would destroy the free choice. To support this idea, he presents a discussion about different types of necessity which, I have argued, points to Anselm's distinction between preceding and sequent necessity.

Given an Augustinian solution to the problem of divine foreknowledge and free choice, the problem of future contingents as described in Boethius's commentaries on *De interpretatione* appears as much ado about nothing. If the future is fixed in the way that God knows it to be fixed, the statements about singular future events must be definitely true and definitely false in the same way as the statements about singular past events. Therefore, the argument which aims at proving that they cannot have a definite truth-value is mistaken. From an Augustinian point of view, all one needs to say about *De interpretatione* 9 is that the necessity which follows from a statement's being definitely true is a necessity of a harmless kind, and that is what Anselm will say in *Cur Deus homo* II 17.

Up to this point, I have produced a reconstruction of the eleventh-century understanding of the problem of future contingents on the basis of some central passages in the works of Anselm, Boethius and Augustine. In the rest of the article, I shall discuss two works by other eleventh-century authors which, in my opinion, strongly support the view developed above. Both works derive from Italy and reflect the discussions during the first half of the century. As already mentioned, Anselm of Canterbury is also

of Italian origin, and he spent his formative years in Italy. (He lived there until 1056, when he was 23.) Even though Anselm composed his most important contributions on the subject several decades later and, for the most part, in Normandy and England, there are many reminiscences of the Italian discussions in his work.

5. *Anselm of Besate*

As far as I know, the very first witness to medieval discussion about future contingents on the basis of *De interpretatione* 9 is the *Rhetorimachia* (1045–1048) by Anselm of Besate. This is a work which has not received much attention in scholarly discussions about the history of modalities or related issues.

Anselm of Besate was probably born shortly after 1020. He was educated ca. 1040–1045 in Reggio and Parma. After that, he served for some time as an imperial scribe and notary. Nothing certain is known of him after 1048, and he probably died young.²⁴ The *Rhetorimachia* (“Rhetorician’s Battle”) is, as the title indicates, a work of rhetoric. In this work, Anselm offers instruction on how the techniques of rhetoric can be applied by presenting a fictitious case against his cousin Rotiland. Anselm composed the *Rhetorimachia* in order to show his erudition and talent, and he intended to use it as a recommendation when offering his services to the emperor and other possible employers. The work is dedicated to Drogo, Anselm’s teacher of dialectic at Parma.²⁵

Even though the *Rhetorimachia* is a work of rhetoric, there are also some passages related to dialectic in it. Because Anselm’s use of dialectic in this work is subordinate to rhetorical ends, the discussions which he offers cannot be straightforwardly used as evidence for what dialecticians thought and taught in Parma in the 1040s. Nevertheless, these passages permit some general observations. Two of the passages are particularly important.

In the first, Anselm refutes Rotiland’s (alleged) accusation that he carries a mule’s hoof with him in order to use it for magic to prevent the birth of children from his illicit relationships. Anselm first claims that he has never even heard of such magic and that it cannot possibly work. The main part of Anselm’s answer, however, is dedicated to what he dubs “an Anselmian treatment of divine predestination” (*Anselmina disputatio de predestinatione dei*). Anselm claims that the future children either will be or will not be. If they will not be, it is impossible for them to be, because what neither has been nor is nor will be is impossible. Anselm argues that it is not possible to prevent something which is impossible because there is nothing to be prevented. If, on the other hand, a child will be, this will be either *utrumlibet* or necessary. If the former is the case, both being and not being are real alternatives in the same way. Therefore, Rotiland’s

²⁴ Manitius (1958) 61–74; Gibson (1978) 13.

²⁵ See Manitius (1958) 74–86.

argument should have included both alternatives and not just the alternative that there will be a child. If, however, the birth of a child is necessary, then Rotiland's suggestion is in conflict with the Christian faith, for the necessity of the divine predestination cannot be prevented through some magic and the high providence cannot be changed in any way.²⁶

In another passage, Anselm argues that Rotiland, being a servant of devil, has lost his free choice and therefore sins of necessity. Anselm offers a definition of free choice (as "the discretion and judgment of the reason and the power of turning either way, either to the good or to the bad") and argues that devil lost his free choice when he sinned for the first time. Both free choice and devil's fall are themes which Anselm of Canterbury will discuss some four decades later in his dialogues *De libertate arbitrii* and *De casu diaboli*. What is particularly interesting in this passage of *Rhetorimachia* is how Anselm of Besate introduces his conclusion, i.e., that the condition of Rotiland must be the same as that of his master, the devil. Anselm says that, regarding Rotiland, "there is no doubt, no *utrumlibet* ... for chance perishes, deliberation perishes, and also free choice is destroyed for you" (*perit enim casus, perit consilium, liberum quoque tibi interit arbitrium*).²⁷ This is a clear allusion to Boethius's discussion of the problem of future contingents.

There is no use spending much effort in arriving at a coherent picture of what Anselm of Besate says in the two passages partly described because they probably were not meant to convey a coherent picture. Anselm wanted to be witty, and the erudite reader or listener was expected to understand his jokes. Nevertheless, Anselm's work is an important witness to the school-discussions within dialectic at his time. Two points are clear. First, in Anselm's school, they were familiar with the Boethian sources and the problem of future contingents was discussed on the basis of them. Second, they were also familiar with some theological sources and they did not discuss the problem of future contingents merely as an internal problem of dialectic but also in connection with theological issues like the questions of predestination and providence. I would like to emphasize the latter point. Anselm of Besate can be characterized as a secular thinker and he presents the secular learning of his time. One easily assumes that "secular" discussion about the problem of future contingents would discard theological considerations. In the early eleventh century, this was not the case, but there was also a strong theological element in the discussions of the more secular nature. This is something which Peter Damian will complain about in his *De divina omnipotentia* (see below), and Peter had studied in Parma in the 1020s.

I have suggested that a typical feature of the eleventh-century discussion about future contingents is that the problem is dissolved by invoking a distinction between

²⁶ Anselm of Besate, *Rhetorimachia* II 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.* III 6.

two kinds of necessity. I shall soon argue that Peter Damian became familiar with such a distinction during his school years. Hence, I think that Anselm of Besate also must have known this distinction. But is there any independent evidence in the *Rhetorimachia* for this? There is one detail which at least points in this direction. In his discussion of Rotiland's servitude to sin, Anselm makes use of expressions which Boethius had used to argue that, if the statements about future events have a definite truth-value, there follows a necessity that destroys free choice. Anselm's allusion to Boethius here is witty if the necessity which Boethius had feared is known to be of a harmless kind. On this assumption, it is a good joke to use Boethius's words in connection with another kind of necessity which allegedly has deterministic implications.

6. *Peter Damian*

De divina omnipotentia (ca. 1065) by Peter Damian (ca. 1007–1072) has often been discussed as background to Anselm of Canterbury's ideas about modality.²⁸ Nevertheless, it cannot be said that *De divina omnipotentia* is a well understood treatise. The older literature gives an utterly distorted picture of Damian's position, and some mistakes are repeated in more recent scholarly work, too. This is at least partly due to the fact that there is also a strong rhetorical element in Damian's work. Unlike Anselm of Besate, though, Peter Damian is a serious thinker.

Damian does not actually discuss either the problem of future contingents or the problem of divine foreknowledge in *De divina omnipotentia*. Instead, he focuses on "past contingents" and divine omnipotence. Damian had been asked whether non-necessary events in the past, like the foundation of Rome in 753 BC, can be undone by God, who is omnipotent. However, the status of the past and the status of the future are connected issues, and Damian makes use of the contemporary discussions about divine foreknowledge and related themes in his attempt to clarify the nature of divine omnipotence. Basically, Damian's idea is that the created history cannot but be as it is. To substantiate this idea, he offers a discussion about divine eternity and providence and maintains that everything which either has happened or will happen stands eternally in the divine plan.²⁹

The discussions which Peter Damian offers in *De divina omnipotentia* make it clear that he is familiar with a distinction of types of necessity which is close to Anselm of Canterbury's distinction between preceding and sequent necessity. He describes a necessity which is similar to Anselm's sequent necessity, and refers to the future contingents in this context (see below). In addition, he discusses a kind of necessity which can infringe upon the freedom of agents, characterizing it as "necessity in nature"

28 E.g., Serene (1981) 138, 158; Marenbon (1996) 10–16; Holopainen (1999); Knuuttila (2004).

29 For a discussion of *De divina omnipotentia*, see Holopainen (1996) 6–43 and (2003).

(*necessitas naturae*). Damian argues that God can bend the laws of nature as he wishes, and therefore his power is not restricted by this necessity. The necessity in nature functions like Anselm's preceding necessity.³⁰

Damian's discussion about the necessity in nature aims at defending divine omnipotence. It is obvious that his treatment of the sequent kind of necessity has the same aim. It is often claimed that Damian simply denies the use of sequent necessity in theological discussion because, if it were applied to God, it would render him completely powerless.³¹ This is not an accurate rendering of Damian's position, however. Damian's point is to argue that, even though sequent necessity appears to make God completely powerless, it really is an expression of his supreme power. In addition, Damian shares with Anselm the idea that sequent necessity is to be viewed as a harmless kind of necessity.

The starting-point for Damian's discussion about sequent necessity is the question whether God can undo the done. Damian accuses those who have asked the question of having acted impetuously since they do not understand the import of their query. They are asking whether God can bring it about that what has been done, will not have been done. However, the kind of impossibility that is implied here concerns not only what is past but also what is present or future. One must also ask whether God can bring it about that what is, is not, or whether he can bring it about that what will be, will not be. In Damian's view, the logic in these questions is the same.³²

At this point, someone might object that it is one thing to speak about the future and future contingents, and another thing to speak about the past. Here, Damian is ready to admit that there are those events which the wise of this world call *utrumlibet*, and he gives three examples corresponding to the traditional three subclasses of *utrumlibet* mentioned by Boethius: going riding (free choice), coming across a friend (chance), the weather being fair (possibility). Damian has no objection to the idea that there are genuinely contingent things. However, the fact that there are genuinely contingent things is one thing and the consequence of necessity and impossibility is something else. The rules of dialectic say that, from the factuality of any statement, regardless of the tense, you can infer its necessity and the impossibility of its contradictory in the following manner: what has been, necessarily has been, and it is impossible that it has not been; what is, necessarily is, as long as it is, and it is impossible that it is not; what will be, necessarily will be, and it is impossible that it will not be.³³

30 Peter Damian, *De divina omnipotentia* 602d–604b, 611d–614c. See also Marenbon (1996) 13–15 and Holopainen (1999) 226–229.

31 Recently, e.g., Marenbon (1996) 14–16.

32 *De divina omnipotentia* 602d.

33 *Ibid.* 603a–603b.

If sequent necessity is a kind of necessity which can limit God's power, then it indeed appears to follow that God is completely powerless, not only regarding the past but also regarding the present and the future.³⁴ However, Damian will proceed to present a discussion about divine eternity and providence and the relation of created history to these.³⁵ As already mentioned, he holds that all the things which either have happened or will happen have an eternal and immutable existence in the divine providential plan. Even if everything which is the case is necessarily the case, it depends on God's will what will be the case in the first place. Furthermore, it is because of the intensity of God's will as an efficient cause of being that the beings have their sequent necessity: what God wills to be cannot not be. Therefore, even if one may first get the impression that sequent necessity makes God completely powerless, this impression is quite wrong. On the contrary, sequent necessity—of which God's inability to undo the done is a corollary—is an indication of God's supreme power:

Therefore, on the basis of those things from which God's power is seen to be greater and more admirable, the people who ineptly conceive of it judge it to be weak and impotent. For if whatever exists comes from him, he has given to things such a force to exist that after once they have existed, it is impossible for them not to have existed.³⁶

Damian's discussion also makes it clear that he considers sequent necessity as a harmless kind of necessity. It is a necessity which follows from a thing's being the case, and not a necessity which makes a thing to be the case. Damian's understanding of sequent necessity looks very much like Anselm's understanding of it.

It seems that Damian also shares with Anselm of Canterbury what I have identified as the eleventh-century understanding of the problem of future contingents. Damian refers to the three classes of things which are *utrumlibet*, and he does not in any way indicate that he doubts the contingent nature of these things. He also denies that the consequence of necessity regarding future things has anything to do with the contingency of the *utrumlibet*. Therefore, we can conclude that the problem of future contingents as formulated by Boethius appears to Damian as being based on confusion.

De divina omnipotentia contains some references to contemporary dialectical discussion. Damian says that the question about the consequence of necessity and impossibility (*quaestio ... de consequentia necessitatis vel impossibilitatis*) is an old question

³⁴ *Ibid.* 603d.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 604c–610d.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 609a: "Vnde ergo Dei uirtus potentior et mirabilior esse perpenditur, inde a stulte sapientibus inpos et inualida iudicatur. Si enim quicquid est ab ipso est, ipse rebus hanc uim existentiae contulit ut postquam semel extiterint, non extitisse non possint."

from the liberal arts which had been discussed in ancient times by both pagans and Christians and has newly been taken up again. What makes the contemporary discussion different from the ancient one, Damian complains, is that whereas the ancients had discussed the question without even mentioning God, the moderns have been presumptuous enough to also speak about God in this connection.³⁷ This remark confirms the picture, gained from *Rhetorimachia*, that the more secular treatments of the problem of future contingents at the time also took into account theological considerations.

Peter Damian composed *De divina omnipotentia* some thirty years after his religious conversion in ca. 1035, and it is unlikely that he would have spent much effort on understanding the problems of dialectic after that date. It is plausible to think that Damian's knowledge of dialectic mainly derives from his schooldays in the 1020s. I would incline to the opinion that the eleventh-century understanding of the problem of future contingents, which is reflected in the works of Damian and the two Anselms, already existed in the 1020s.

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³⁷ *Ibid.* 604a.

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TANELI KUKKONEN

Mind and Modal Judgement: Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd on Conceivability and Possibility

Recent meta-level examination of the practice of analytic philosophy has brought about a resurgence of interest in how conceivability is supposed to relate to possibility. It has been noted that contemporary philosophers of various stripes routinely engage in thought experiments of various kinds and that a remarkable—sometimes surprising—amount of confidence seems to be put in such imaginary exercises. A typical example is the way an appeal to the conceivability of a scenario is used to demonstrate the contingency of a given state of affairs; but more complex examples abound, and some have proved remarkably difficult to decipher.¹

On what level and to what extent is such confidence warranted? Does a genuine connection exist between what we can think of and what is actually possible? And if so, what kind of bond is this? Many people would agree that conceivability bears some relation to what might be termed metaphysical possibility, as plainly it is less restrictive than garden-variety physical possibility, yet conceivability requires more than some thing's being merely logically possible. Yet metaphysical possibility itself remains a vague category: if the lines cannot be drawn any more precisely than this, then the relationship remains basically unsettled.

One way of approaching the problem would be to focus on the psychological mechanisms associated with conceptualisation. But this line of attack brings with it its own share of troubles. In an introduction to a recent volume on *Conceivability and Possibility*, Tamar Szabo Gendler and John Hawthorne note that one reason why contemporary discussions often appear ill-defined is that it is not at all clear what role conceivability could or should play in a naturalised epistemology and psychology. While our perceptual qualities are thought to enjoy a natural correspondence relation with features in the world around us and to fulfil a useful function in helping us navigate it, no such link is typically postulated as regards our imaginary or conceptual powers.²

The remark is instructive from a systematic standpoint, but for practitioners of the history of philosophy it carries especial significance. For although it is true that there

1 See Gendler & Hawthorne (2002); from a phenomenological standpoint, Le Doeuff (1989); for a feminist critique, La Caze (2002).

2 For these remarks, see Gendler & Hawthorne (2002) 3–6.

is no consensus regarding the psychic faculties over and above the senses in much of modern philosophy (perhaps not regarding the senses themselves), the same cannot be said for the better part of the late ancient and medieval philosophical traditions. Due to the body of Aristotelian commentary building on the *De anima* and the small psychological treatises collected in the *Parva naturalia*, a relatively stable picture can be found in the late ancient and medieval traditions concerning the way the various sensory and cognitive capacities stack up and relate to each other. Especially after the consolidation efforts of Ibn Sinā (the Latin Avicenna, 980–1037) the powers of imagination (Gr. *phantasia*) and intellectual conception (*nous*) occupy more or less fixed positions within this overall scheme.³

My intention in this small piece is to examine how the psychological notions of conceivability and imaginability map onto the question of possibility in one seminal piece of post-Avicennian Arabic philosophical debate. Because the exchange documented in Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, 1095, henceforth *TF*) and Abū al-Walīd Ibn Rushd's, or the Latin Averroes' *Incoherence of the Incoherence* (*Tahīfut al-tahāfut*, 1180, *IT*) is to a large extent predicated on al-Ghazālī's perception that an unwarranted necessitarianism pervades the Muslim philosophers' worldview, divergent conceptions of possibility and necessity lie at the heart of al-Ghazālī's and Ibn Rushd's debate concerning the eternity of the world.⁴ The broader question of what can be allowed (*yūjāzu*) in thought informs the *Incoherence* debates as a whole, as both al-Ghazālī and Ibn Rushd repeatedly weigh in on what kinds of hypotheses constitute premises suitable for philosophical reflection.⁵ This in turn comes back to the conceivability and/or imaginability of unconventional (from the Aristotelian point of view) cosmologies, something on which the two thinkers seem constantly at odds.

1. *Imagining Things*

The link between conceivability and possibility is evoked right at the beginning of the *Tahāfut* debates, as al-Ghazālī summarises what he takes to be the philosophers' most salient proof for the world's eternity. The proof posits a supposedly necessary connection between an agent which is forever immutable and the object of its actions; al-Ghazālī parries with a disarmingly simple question.

3 See G. Strohmaier, "Avicennas Lehre von den 'inneren Sinnen' und ihre Vosassetzungen bei Galen"; reprinted in Strohmaier (1996) 330–341.

4 See Kukkonen (2000a, b).

5 This can be characterised as a discussion about the contradictory terms possibility and impossibility, as opposed to possibility and necessity.

Do you know the impossibility of an eternal will related to the temporal creation (*ḥudūth*) of something, whatever that thing is, through the necessity of intellect or its theoretical reflection? According to your language in logic, is the connection between the two terms⁶ known to you with or without a middle term? If you claim a middle term, which is the reflective theoretical method, then you must show it. If (by contrast) you claim to know this (impossibility) through the necessity of reason (*darūrat-an*), how is it, then, that those who oppose you do not share this knowledge, when the party believing in the world's temporal creation by an eternal will is (such) that no one land (can) contain it and (that its) number is beyond enumeration? And these certainly do not stubbornly defy reason while possessing the (requisite) understanding (*ma'rifa*).⁷

Al-Ghazālī draws on an understanding of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, according to which certitude rests on sound demonstration based on prior principles that are themselves more evident than what a prospective demonstration would be founded on. As for the latter, these must finally be traceable back to some first principles that are evident in themselves: and al-Ghazālī follows Avicenna's lead in thinking that such first principles are given as innate to all humankind.⁸ Al-Ghazālī calls such principles "necessary," an appellation to which we shall return.

The challenge is this: the impossibility of a limited creation issuing from an eternal will has not yet been proved demonstratively (or "through a middle term"), nor will it be, as the *Incoherence's* First Discussion frustrates the philosophers' every stab at a proof.⁹ But could it be an intuitively evident proposition, a "clear and distinct notion" in Descartes' terms? In a move that carries echoes both of Aristotle's *Topics* (I II, 104b8–9) and of Islamic discussions on what constitutes a consensus view or *ijmā'*, al-Ghazālī contends that it cannot: the sheer number of reputable people whose

6 Marmura takes the two terms in question to be an eternal will and a temporal creation, but the reference could also be to an eternal will and an eternal creation. If a necessary connection can be demonstrated to exist between the latter two terms, then any other outcome is impossible: and this is precisely what the philosophers want in al-Ghazālī's analysis.

7 *TF*, 17, 6–12. English translations for the *Incoherence* are taken from the second edition of Michael E. Marmura's edition and translation, sometimes with slight modifications, while other translations are my own; angular brackets indicate added and square brackets excised materials.

8 On the *Posterior Analytics* in the Arabic tradition, see Marmura (1990); for primary concepts specifically, Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā'*, *Metaphysics*, bk. I, ch. 5, and the comments in Marmura (1984).

9 For an account of the philosophers' proofs, see Leaman (1988) ch. 1; on al-Ghazālī's views concerning the limits of demonstrability, Marmura (1965).

intuitions on the matter differ is sufficient proof of this.¹⁰ So the inevitability with which the philosophers credit their views crumbles upon closer inspection: accordingly, a metaphysics that connects a temporal creation to an eternal agent must *prima facie* be admissible. The simple fact that people have entertained a notion suffices to point to its (logical) possibility, which in the case of world-building *ex nihilo* is enough.¹¹

In the above-mentioned example the appeal seems to be to the ability of some people to depict an alternative scenario. But what of propositions nobody's imagination will countenance? No matter: by pointing to instances where the philosophers themselves distinguish between our ability to *deduce* and to *imagine*, it becomes possible to drive a wedge between the powers of depiction (i.e. imagination, or *al-mutakhayyilah*) and conception (intellect, *al-'aql*), and to indicate that it is only the latter that is determinant of true possibility. The upshot is that even if our imaginary powers sometimes fail us, this should not deter us from assenting to what reason requires.

This is what the philosophers themselves require when they talk of separate substances. For on what other grounds do they postulate the existence of an essence that neither enters the world nor stands outside of it? "Within the confines of our reality we cannot conceive of such a thing," a sceptic will scoff, to which the philosopher replies that it is precisely the qualifier "within *our* reality" (*fī ḥaqqi-nā*) that is crucial here. For while it is true that our embodied life does not present us with anything comparable to a strange beast such as a separate substance, this is not the only reality there is.¹² The doubter should be told: "It is only your ⟨faculty of⟩ estimation that is at work here: an intellectual proof (*dalīl al-'aql*), meanwhile, has led reasonable ⟨people⟩ to assent to this" (*TF*, 23, 9–11). The use of the term estimation (*al-wahm*) here is technical, reflecting Ibn Sīnā's theory of this mental faculty working in conjunction with the imaginative faculty in producing mental representations.¹³ As part of the arsenal of the so-called inner senses, both only work with materials that are ultimately acquired from sensible particulars: consequently, both remain in important ways bound to the present world order. Already by def-

10 See further *TF*, 12, 1–13; on the role of consensus opinion in the debate between al-Ghazālī and Averroes, see Bello (1989).

11 Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī (d. 1085) reasons identically in his *Book of Guidance* (*Kitāb al-irshād*), in the chapter on "The vision of God the Exalted."

12 In several works, al-Ghazālī speaks of the various cognitive faculties as revealing different "worlds" (*'ālam*): see, e.g., the chapter on prophecy in his autobiography, *Al-munqidh min al-dalāl*.

13 On the details, see Black (1993). Following Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī refers to this compositive faculty in its human guise as cogitation (*fikr*) in the *Niche of Lights* (37, 3–6): he situates it in its familiar place within the Avicennian hierarchy, above the imagination, but below the intellect (41, 11).

inition, the limits to our imagination are set by what we have access to through our senses. Intellect, by contrast, casts a wider net, and its jurisdiction reaches further.

But if this holds true for the simple postulation of an immaterial substance—something the likes of which we can never encounter in everyday life and which we can therefore never imagine—why not other facets of reality with which we are not acquainted first-hand? Take for instance the comparison between the eternal and created wills. Even if we were to grant that the created will always moves immediately from thought to execution, provided that nothing intervenes,¹⁴ does this mean that the same thing need be true of the eternal and divine will? No, for the latter's mode of being may be quite different from anything we have experienced. The same line of reasoning takes care, e.g., of the philosophers' contention in their so-called "second proof" that a creation out of nothing cannot be imagined, because any moment is automatically perceived as dividing time into future and past. According to al-Ghazālī the inability of the mind to come to terms with a first moment of creation beyond which there was neither time, nor motion, nor a single created thing

is similar to the inability of the estimation to suppose the finitude of body overhead, for example, except in terms of a surface that has an above, thereby imagining that beyond the world there is no place, either filled or void. Thus, if it is said that there is no "above" (*fawq*) above the surface of the world and no distance more distant than it, the estimation holds back from acquiescing to it, just as if it is said that before (*qibla*) the world's existence there is no "before" which is realised in existence, (and the estimation) shies away from accepting it. (*TF*, 32, 20–33, 3)

The comparison between finite space and infinite time derives from a portion of John Philoponus' *Physics* commentary lost to us in the Greek original, but preserved in the Leiden manuscript of Ishāq Ibn Ḥunayn's Arabic translation of the *Physics*. A similar argument is also found in Augustine.¹⁵ What al-Ghazālī adds is a level of terminological precision: where in Philoponus' extant work *Against Proclus on the Eternity of the World*

¹⁴ Through an example taken from Islamic divorce law al-Ghazālī in fact implies that this need not be the case even here on earth, see *TF*, 15, 21–16, 9 and Averroes' comments *ad loc*.

¹⁵ See Aristūṭālis, *al-Ṭabī'a*, 816, 14–17; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XI 5. The two authors write independently of each other, but both may have taken a clue from Posidonius' and Cleomedes' arguments in favour of the existence of void, see Sorabji (1988) 128–129. Sorabji mistakenly attributes an actual belief in extracosmic void to al-Ghazālī: al-Ghazālī, however, argues merely *ad hominem*, showing how those who believe in a time before creation might as well believe in a void beyond the world.

our inability to picture a first moment of time is attributed to the inadequacies of our contemplative faculty in general (*theôrêtikon*, *De aet.*, 116–117), al-Ghazālī can point to the inner senses as the precise source of our confusion. It is our easy familiarity with the materials surrounding our everyday life that makes us unable to envision the special circumstances that obtain at the far ends of the universe.

Magnitude and time are equivalent in this respect. It is true that the human mind is unable to dissociate the notion of the moment from those of “before” and “after”; likewise, it is normally the case that

what is contrary to belief (yet possibly true) can be posited in the estimative faculty as a supposition and a hypothesis. But this, as with space, is one of the things that cannot be placed within the estimative faculty. For neither the believer in the body’s finitude nor the one who disbelieves it is able to suppose a body beyond which there is no void nor a filled space, their estimative faculties not acquiescing to the acceptance of this. But it is said, “If clear reason (*ṣarīḥ al-‘aql*) through proof does not disallow the existence of a finite body, then one must not heed the estimation.” Similarly, clear reason does not disallow a first beginning that is preceded by nothing; and if the estimation falls short of grasping this, one must not heed it.¹⁶

The claim is that the limits of our imaginative abilities do not conform to the actual boundaries of what is possible. The philosophers are willing to acknowledge this in the case of the physical edge of the universe:¹⁷ why then not with respect to its temporal limits? What is there to prevent one from maintaining that time and the world came into existence together a certain number of years in the past?¹⁸ The truth of the matter is that our experience of things taking place in a certain manner (bodies always being surrounded by other bodies, events taking place after previous ones) has conditioned us to expect everything everywhere to follow the same pattern. Yet the customary order of nature does not translate into strict logical necessity.

16 *TF*, 35, 17–36, 2. Philoponus reflects upon our inability to correctly conceptualise the timeless priority of God to the world at *In Phys.*, 456, 16–458, 16: he, too, contends that the mind can correct the incorrect usage of words like “was,” “once,” and “time.”

17 A thought experiment of Philoponus’ concerning the possibility of intracosmic void drew a similar comment from earlier Arabic philosophers, see Aristūṭālīs, *al-Ṭabī‘a*, 321, 15–23, and for comments, Giannakis (1998) 262–266.

18 See further Marmura (1959); cf. Simplicius’ testimony of a similar train of thought in Philoponus, *In Phys.*, 1158, 29–1159, 1. Al-Kindī’s (d. ca. 870) *On First Philosophy*, ch. 2 reproduces the argument in Arabic philosophy.

2. *Conceiving of Possible Worlds*

This is the real crux of the matter, and the source of much of al-Ghazālī's polemics both in the *Incoherence* and elsewhere. Based on an attentive reading of Avicenna's modal metaphysics combined with a helping of Ash'arite occasionalism, al-Ghazālī can claim that the philosophers' necessitarian metaphysics of emanation is not the only game in town. To the contrary, a wide array of world orders is equally conceivable. Because of the fundamental contingency of everything except the Necessary Existent, God in His omnipotence could have chosen to create a universe of any description, provided only that this description answer to the demand of internal consistency. For example, the known cosmos could be of any finite size in terms of both its extension and age, since it is only the specification that the entirety of creation be limited that is rationally required.¹⁹ The finitude of created reality is built into every possible world as a general rational principle and as such is necessary, not contingent: the claim is strong, but apparently left in place so as to make the existence of an extracosmic Creator likewise a necessary fact. Otherwise, though, none of the internally consistent descriptions of the world need even be thought of as necessarily holding true for all time. Rather, everything that comes into being does so at the discretion of the specifying Agent (*al-Murajjih*) at each and every moment.

At times al-Ghazālī comes close to anticipating Duns Scotus' affirmation of synchronic alternatives; even on a conservative estimate, he distinguishes between natural and conceptual possibilities in a way that differs significantly from the predominantly temporally interpreted modal logic and science of the Arabic Aristotelians.²⁰ For our purposes this is important, because it is due to these divergences that al-Ghazālī comes to place special emphasis on the role of conceivability in establishing the modal status of propositions. Since every modal determination in the end concerns either the existence or the properties of some possible being, or a concatenation of the same, all talk of possibilities finally reduces to an intellectual judgement of one type or another (*qaḍā' al-'aql*: *TF*, 42, 2). No reference to actual existents is necessary, only that the mind be capable of grasping a certain set of beings and their properties.

In this testing process imaginability is a useful tool, but in the end of secondary importance. A few examples from speculative theology may throw light on the relation.

19 *TF*, 40, 7–15. The conceivability of alternatives to the current world order is frequently used to cast doubt over the philosophers' necessitarian claims: al-Ghazālī, e.g., points out that one cannot but concede that the poles of the world could have been set at any arbitrary (opposite) points, and that the whole universe could be a mirror image of itself in terms of its rotational patterns. See *TF*, 25, 6–15.

20 On al-Ghazālī, see Kukkonen (2000b); on the temporal-frequency model of modalities in the Arabic tradition, e.g., Rescher (1967).

In the Sixth Discussion of the *Incoherence* al-Ghazālī says that the estimative faculty is wide enough to encompass the notion of the divine essence existing first by itself and of its self-awareness only then arising, at a later stage of the thought experiment as it were (*TF*, 108, 9–13). This points to the fact that the separation of God’s essence from his knowledge is a genuine logical possibility on the philosophers’ own suppositions: were this not the case, then it would be inconceivable that such a thought could even be formulated. So whenever something can be held in the estimative faculty and moulded into a coherent image, it must thereby also be regarded as possible—in itself, that is, not from the point of view of the fully determined divine will.

As remarked earlier, however, the reach of reason is more comprehensive still. In his *Explication of the Beautiful Names of God* al-Ghazālī claims that it is strictly inconceivable that God should have an equal: this is in comparison with the sun, whose division can be held in the estimative power (*wahm*) and whose having a companion of a similar rank is comprehensible at least on the principled level.²¹ The difference is the following: dividing the sun up into parts is a geometrical exercise, to be executed on an imagined physical body insofar as it is a mathematical object.²² Conceiving of a second sun, by contrast, does not fit in with the current world order at all and hence it cannot be envisioned in the standard sense. Its possibility must be an adjudication of the intellect, which moves freely between possible worlds. Conceivability thus trumps the mere ability to depict scenarios.²³

Once we let go of the demand for depictability, are there limits to what we may deem conceivable? In the *Book of Knowledge*, the treatise that opens the *Revivification of the Religious Sciences*, al-Ghazālī maintains that the faculty of intellect can be understood in four senses, the second of which is that whereby the possibility of the possibles (*jawāz al-jā’izāt*) and the impossibility of impossibilities (*istihāla al-mustaḥīlāt*) is discerned. He gives tacit approval to the custom of calling such knowledge “necessary,” and cites as examples the axioms that one is more than two and that one individual cannot occupy two places at once.²⁴ It is furthermore said that such knowledge is intrinsic to humans (it occurs *bi-al-ṭab*), and that it has been implanted in us as an instinct (*gharīza*), not merely as contingent and occasional knowledge.²⁵ All of this points in the direction that al-Ghazālī counts at least certain syntactic princi-

21 *Al-maqṣad al-asnā*, 77 and 144.

22 For the Aristotelian background, see *Phys.* II 2, 193b23–194a11.

23 The background to this lies in Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā*, bk. V, ch. 1 (Marmura ed., 148, 13–149, 2), which in turn draws on Aristotle, *Metaph.* VII 15, 1040a28–b3. Cf. in this regard also al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, “On God’s Unqualified Unity.”

24 *Iḥyā’ ulūm al-dīn*, I 83, 27–29; cf. *Ma’ārij al-quds*, 43.

25 Cf. *TF*, 170, 17–171, 11: a passage in which al-Ghazālī argues that relevant knowledge of events that are logically contingent but habitually recurrent is imprinted in our minds through the grace of God.

ples for conceiving of worlds not as contingent, but as necessary: such principles as for instance the law of non-contradiction authentically carve up the realm of raw possibilities into lesser and greater universes in which the rule of *compossibility* is upheld. This does not act as a deterrent to divine power, because an out-and-out contradiction is not a genuine object of divine power (*maqdūr*), nor even a thing (*shayʿ*): it is simply not there to be chosen. (*TF*, 38, 17–18; 175, 5–7.) Interestingly, al-Ghazālī holds that the law of non-contradiction also excludes “affirming the more specific while denying the more general.” This appears to indicate that something like Porphyry’s Tree is in effect in any world one may conceive of. But because al-Ghazālī’s remarks on the structure of the intelligible world are left vague—perhaps purposely so—the precise weight of this statement is not altogether easy to determine.

3. *Perceiving Necessary Relations*

“Between the idea/And the reality [...] Between the conception/And the creation
[...] Falls the Shadow” (T.S. Eliot, *The Straw Men*, V).

This is al-Ghazālī’s belief, as central to his thought as any: that a close examination of the limits of intellect will reveal its opening into a multitude of genuinely conceivable alternate world orders, each of which is equally possible from the point of view of uninhibited divine power. Amongst such indiscernible alternatives we will not be able to adjudicate; and where reason fails to establish necessary connections, the possibility of placing our trust in Scripture opens up. (Cf. *TF*, 48, 4–6; 106, 9–13.)

Championing the Aristotelian viewpoint that knowledge, being, and the good alike are grounded in the universal, the necessary, and the eternal,—to evoke the slogan of the *Posterior Analytics*, “that things could not be otherwise than they are”—Ibn Rushd finds this notion off-putting to the core. Many things which at first blush appear contingent may upon closer inspection turn out to be necessary, for such is the very logic of scientific progress (*TT*, 44, 13–14): for instance, it will turn out that every hypothetical universe will necessarily find its limit in a system of bounded spheres (*TT*, 46, 8–9). But this is a conclusion reached only after arduous investigation, not an intuition at which people would hit instinctively. There is no substitute for the incremental collation of suitable premises and organisation of syllogisms. In the meantime, we should not hesitate to put our trust in the belief that everything is ordained either for the best, or because there was no other way.²⁶

²⁶ Cf. *TT*, 47, 6–7; *TT*, 50, 1–52, 4; Aristotle, *Metaph.* XII 7, 1072b12–14. The comments at *TT*, 411–413 and 96–97 are instructive: Ibn Rushd posits that (a) belief in an optimum always

On a general level, Ibn Rushd may agree that “many things exist that are impossible to imagine, just as many imagined things do not exist.”²⁷ Yet the cautionary lessons he draws are quite different from al-Ghazālī’s. Imagination may aid as well as hinder scientific inquiry; in every case, it should be used to illuminate the present world order, not with the aim of coming up with fanciful alternatives to it. This attitude towards the uses of imagination and conception merits further investigation.

We may begin with al-Ghazālī’s claim, mentioned earlier, that not everyone would consent to the claim that an eternal will’s link to a temporal creation is inconceivable. Faced with this seemingly commonsense objection, Ibn Rushd’s first line of defence seems surprisingly feeble: he simply asserts that “it does not belong to the conditions pertaining to a thing understood in itself (*ma‘rūf bi-nafsi-hi*) that it should be acknowledged by all” (*TT*, 13, 17). Ibn Rushd notes that not all common opinions (*mashhūrāt*) are intrinsically understood, and this is surely right: some commonly held beliefs will turn out simply to be mistaken. But should not all things that are understood intrinsically also be recognised by everybody?

The answer turns on how we interpret the phrase, “understood in itself.” If this is taken in the sense of some thing’s being self-evident, as al-Ghazālī would have it, then plainly consensus will have a role to play in making the appropriate determinations. And indeed, the Arabic root form *‘-r-f* with its connotations of perception or direct apprehension, recognition, and acknowledgement seems to invite parallels between direct perception and intuitive understanding.²⁸ Ibn Rushd nods in this direction on occasion within the *Incoherence* debate, noting that a select few shared principles have to be taken as given and as constitutive of rational discussion itself. If a civilised argument ultimately rests on some set of shared premises, however minimal, then those who deny even the most evident truths set themselves beyond the reach of reason by their own actions—consequently, outside human community itself (*khārij ‘an al-insāniyya*, *TT*, 31, 3):

One who, due to a deficient nature, does not acknowledge that which is intrinsically understood cannot be taught a thing, nor is there any sense in educating him. It is as if one were to try to teach the blind about the forms or existence of colours. (*TT*, 31, 6–8)

For Ibn Rushd, however, such principles constitute only the barest beginnings of rational discourse. Demonstrative science based on necessary relations must aim far

and in every situation is the only safeguard against arbitrariness and irrationality, and that (b) it is only right to conceive of a perfect being as spontaneously willing what is best.

²⁷ See the *Commentary on the Physics* (henceforth “*In Phys.*”), book III, comm. 75, fol. 120K.

²⁸ Al-Ghazālī considers this notion to be especially important, as he ties it in with the Islamic tradition of “bearing witness” (*mushāhada*); on the topic, see Fabre (1958).

higher and, in accordance with this, reach further. For Ibn Rushd, al-Ghazālī's reference to things "understood in themselves" must consequently be equated with Aristotle's class of things knowable in themselves or by nature, which stands in contrast to things known more immediately—by *us*, that is (see, e.g., *Phys.* I 1; *Metaph.* VII 3, 1029b3–12). While the latter, when put to the test of dialectical enquiry, may prove less clear than they appeared initially, the former are the ones at which the scientist will eventually arrive and the standard by which the truth will henceforth be judged. Thus, even if the general programme of "saving the appearances" remains in place, one need not pay too much heed to common opinion when formulating scientific premises. What is acceptable and what is not is in the final run determined by those who possess an adequate understanding of the science at issue, not by the intuitions and guesswork that characterise the claims put forward by the uneducated.

If two ⟨people⟩ quarrel about a ⟨poetic⟩ sentence, one claiming that it is rhythmically balanced while the other maintains that it is not, the determination can only lie with that unimpaired nature which is ⟨capable of⟩ perceiving the well-proportioned ⟨sentences⟩ from among those that are not, and with the science of prosody. Thus when one perceives a metre, one's perception of it is not shaken in the least by someone denying ⟨its existence⟩; similarly ⟨blanket⟩ denial does nothing to disturb a judgement in which there is certitude among the steadfast. (*TT*, 16, 1–6)

Acting as the guarantor of right reason is the science of logic, which ensures that reliable and proper procedure is followed throughout when starting from the primary premises mentioned earlier.²⁹ Thus when it comes to questions such as the possibility of an eternal will attaching to a temporal creation, what one might like to think or entertain should play no part; rather, the argument must be taken in the direction it will go.

If there should be controversy in matters such as this, the decision (*amr*)³⁰ can only be referred back to a judgement issuing from an excellent nature (*fiṭra fā'iqa*) not swayed by ⟨one's personal⟩ viewpoint or passion when it probes ⟨the matter⟩ in accordance with the signs and conditions by which certain ⟨truths⟩ are distinguished from mere opinions, ⟨as outlined⟩ in the book of logic. (*TT*, 15, 12–16, 1)

29 Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Ma'ārij al-quds*, 77, where logic is similarly presented as a "canonical" tool designed to keep one from going astray.

30 Van Den Bergh (1954, p. 8) in his translation of *TT* has "criterion": I like the suggestion, but do not believe it can be substantiated in Ibn Rushd's case, who in general was not attuned to Hellenistic terminology.

Plainly for Ibn Rushd this is the mind conditioned by a close and extensive study of Aristotelian logic and science; and this in turn teaches about the necessity of the current world order in its general outline.

Such distinctions allow Ibn Rushd to deal with al-Ghazālī's equal treatment of time and bodily extension, a comparison he simply rejects out of hand. Despite common appearances, a point on a line simply is not like a moment in time:³¹ the conception of every instant marking a boundary between a past and a future time stems from its definition (*TT*, 76, 12–13; cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* IV 13, 222a10–12), whereas when one imagines either body or void outside the outermost sphere one is merely conjuring up apparitions and imagining a nullity (*tawhumu al-khayāl, tawhumu al-bāṭil*: *TT*, 75, 7; 78, 12). The difference is crucial, for not every supposition is created equal. Body, on the one hand, and time and motion, on the other, are of a different order altogether. A body's place is something accidental to it (as the fact that the body of the outermost celestial sphere does not have a place, strictly speaking, shows), whereas motion itself would be inconceivable without two instants, motion between them, and motion to either side of each. Furthermore, of the three quantities of motion, time, and body, body alone possesses position and totality (*wad' wa-kull*: *TT*, 76, 1–5). This will make Aristotle's arguments against the realisation of an infinite whole pertinent in its case, whereas with respect to motion and time this is not so apparent. As Ibn Rushd sees it, only an ignorance of proper scientific principles and procedures could have conspired to produce such a pernicious comparison.³²

4. Abstracting from Circumstances

Ibn Rushd's commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* further expands on Aristotle's own remark that a reliance on thinking (*noein*) is improper when determining how far physical body can expand. Because the Arabic translation of the *Physics* substitutes "imagination" for "thought" (so also Michael Scot's Latin) Ibn Rushd can argue as follows: if a thought experiment is conducted where volume is augmented without limit (see *In Phys.*, bk. III, comm. 60, fol. 113H–114G), such an exercise is executed strictly *more geometrico*. It is done through abstracting from the conditions that pertain to natural philosophy: however, such natural philosophical principles cannot be ignored in the context of cosmology. Assuming further growth beyond the physical edge of the cosmos would mean the postulation of either void or further body beyond the sphere of the stars, neither option being acceptable on Aristotelian premises. Consequently,

³¹ *TT*, 76, 15 ff.; cf. Philoponus, as reported by Simplicius, *In Phys.*, 1167, 1–16.

³² The point is reiterated at *In Phys.*, bk. VIII, comm. 11, fol. 346I–M, where Ibn Rushd also acknowledges the inability of the mind to imagine a first or a last moment.

“imagining the world to be larger or smaller (than it is) is not sound, but impossible.”³³ Possibilities in the case of physical bodies are properly analysed as potentialities, that is, abilities inhering in actual embodied substances, not as abstractions: in the case of the outermost heavenly body, this will forestall any consideration of its augmentation or diminution—indeed, any change beyond that of simple circular locomotion.³⁴

Short of a full-blown investigation into the Arabic Peripatetics’ way of identifying eternity and necessity, it is difficult to ascertain whether Ibn Rushd is guilty of begging the question here.³⁵ But what of his claim that the scientifically relevant imaginary exercise is abstractive in nature? This has to do primarily with Ibn Rushd’s idiosyncratic conception of Aristotelian thought experiments as dealing in different levels of abstraction. Building on some critical remarks made by Galen, the commentary tradition had located a problem in Aristotle’s usage of impossible hypotheses in his works on natural philosophy. How can anything be built on the basis of such self-refuting claims? Ibn Rushd in his late commentary works posits that Aristotle, whenever he seems to put forward impossible hypotheses for our acceptance, never means to talk about real, fully specified *infimae* species (let alone individual substances). Instead, Aristotle is talking about strange entities such as man-qua-animal, or sphere-qua-body. These abstractions are entertained and examined in the mind in order to throw light on certain conceptual relations: they are not intended to indicate the possible existence of such individuals as for instance a flying man, or a stationary sphere.³⁶

Ibn Rushd does envision one legitimate use for imaginary thought exercises, although here, too, the focus remains on the existent world order, certain aspects of which are highlighted by means of abstracting from its myriad qualities. In rhetoric as well as in poetics, a representative image (*khayāl*) can be used as a simile or example (*mithāl*) in order to highlight either a particular or a structural feature that is similar in two seemingly unconnected instances. For example, the comparison of the ruler to the sun, according to its different usages, can be used to draw attention either to the ruler’s supreme goodness and self-sufficiency or to the ruler’s role in maintaining order in the universe.³⁷ Whether the likeness drawn by the poet or rhetor is grounded in fact is in a sense immaterial. What is important in each case is the conviction produced in the resulting proposition, e.g., that the ruler is good, as is the rule of one. In a similar

33 *TT*, 88, 2–3, and for the Aristotelian basis of these claims, see Charlton (1991) 129–131.

34 On Averroes and the powers-based interpretation of possibility, see Kogan (1985) 100–135; for the Aristotelian background regarding the heavens, *Phys.* VIII 7–9, *De caelo* I 2–4, and *Metaph.* XII 2, 1069b25–27.

35 For a sketch of Averroes’ modal metaphysics, see Kukkonen (2000a).

36 See Kukkonen (2002a), (2005).

37 See, e.g., *The Epitome of the Art of Rhetoric*, in *Three Short Commentaries*, Butterworth ed., para. 28; for this example, see Aristotle, *Metaph.* XII 10, 1275a11–24 and Averroes’ comments *ad loc.*

vein, Ibn Rushd can also illustrate the contingency of the entire created order through a simile that again evokes the relation between the ruler and the ruled:

If you imagine a commander (*āmir*) who has many subjects (*ma'mūrūna*), and that those subjects again command others, and that for those commanded there is no existence except in the reception of this command and its execution, and that for those below the ones commanded there is no existence except through the ones commanded, then it is necessary that the first commander is the one who grants to all (these) exists the attribute³⁸ through which they come to exist. Furthermore, if there is a thing whose existence consists in its being commanded, then it will have no existence except from the first commander. (*TT*, 186, 12–187, 3)

Ibn Rushd falls back on these kinds of illustrative parallels every so often, but it has to be said that he never holds them in any high regard. This is because the structural isomorphism between the illustration and the scientific truth which it is meant to illustrate is, after all, only incidental, and the conviction therefore remains in a sense ill-founded, even if it should be correct.³⁹ Those not versed in the sciences may be more apt to accept particular premises if they have an image or an imaginary simile to fall back on, but a scientific mind should not rely on such crutches, nor should it shirk from accepting conclusions for which no immediate imaginary support can be found (*TT*, 256–257).

Even in cases where the drawing of unconventional comparisons is deemed admissible, Ibn Rushd is quick to point to some necessary limitations on such activity. A poet may elicit an understanding of sensible things through other sensible things, or of matters conceptual through matters sensual, or of animate things through things inanimate:⁴⁰ yet the closer one remains to actual or at least possible states of affairs, the truer one stays to the poet's true vocation, which is to promote virtue and discourage vice.⁴¹ The states of affairs to which the poet points are supposed to hold always or for the most part, on either side of the equation;⁴² if one deals with genuinely contingent

38 The term here is *ma'nā*, which regularly denotes "intention" in Averroes' vocabulary, but that cannot be the proper translation here. It seems rather that in this instance, Averroes accommodates *kalām* terminology; for *ma'nā* as attribute or accident, see Frank (1967).

39 See Taylor (2000); on cosmological and theological arguments in particular, Kukkonen (2002b).

40 *Talkhīṣ kitāb al-shi'r* (Middle Commentary on the Poetics), paras. 64 and 69.

41 *Talkhīṣ kitāb al-shi'r*, paras. 38–39; on Averroes' understanding of the syllogisms employed in the rhetorical and poetical arts in comparison with al-Fārābī and Avicenna, see Black (1990).

42 Following Aristotle's *Physics* II 8, 198b34–37, this is Averroes' criterion for scientific knowledge concerning the natural world; for comments, see Kogan (1985) 135–164.

connections, one assumes the mantle of a rhetorician, while evoking strictly impossible things is not to be encouraged at all.⁴³

5. Appendix: Imagining and Creating

In a study of Aristotelian perception and consciousness, Deborah Modrak remarks that while Aristotle's treatment of the imagination in relation to the intellect opens up the possibility of treating the way in which people conceive of, and have opinions about, future states of affairs and other nonexistent objects, "this aspect of intentionality receives little attention from him."⁴⁴ This lack in Aristotelian theory, if indeed it is a lack, is understandable given the naturalistic concerns that drive the Stagirite's account. Aristotle's interest lies primarily in explaining how human beings interact meaningfully with the physical world, not in how the soul as a prospective self-mover might generate things in and of herself. We have seen how Ibn Rushd as an Aristotelian commentator by and large follows in his master's footsteps.⁴⁵

This disinterest (if not outright disdain) for the imagination's capacity to make up its own mind, so to speak, is in keeping with the mainstream of Arabic Peripatetic psychology. Ibn Sīnā, for example, in his guise as a physician classifies the imagining of non-existent things as one of the cognitive disorders that rises from a temperamental imbalance in the brain.⁴⁶ And in the *Jerusalem Ascent Concerning the Stages of the Soul* attributed to al-Ghazālī—a work that bears a strong Avicennian stamp—correct and futile (*bāṭil*) uses of the imagination are distinguished according to whether the imagination works at understanding the way the world really works, or whether it toys around with non-entities.⁴⁷

Yet it is through Ibn Sīnā's efforts that a different take on the imaginative faculty also takes hold in the Arabic philosophical tradition. In accounting for the soul's afterlife Ibn Sīnā takes time to discuss the origin and ontological standing of fictitious entities (an ancient metaphysical puzzle that bears directly on the limits of conceivability);⁴⁸ and in his discussions of prophecy he gives a positive account of the way in which the imaginative and estimative powers of a particularly power-

43 *Talkhīṣ kitāb al-shi'r*, para. 104.

44 Modrak (1987) 149.

45 The sections related to imagination in Ibn Rushd's various commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima* exhibit the same tendencies, with great attention being lavished on the imagination's place in a naturalistic epistemology; occasional comment being passed on its tendency to get things wrong; and virtually no consideration given to the epistemological or ontological status of such imaginary entities.

46 *Al-Qanūn fī al-ṭibb*, vol. 2, 813; cf. Aëtius, *Placita* IV 12 Diels (=SVF II 54).

47 See *Ma'ārij al-quds*, 62.

48 See Black (1997).

ful soul may mould and influence outward reality in accordance with the intelligible reality they behold.⁴⁹ Common to these discussions is the conviction that the estimative and imaginative powers can be accessed from the above, as it were, by the intellect, and forced to translate the eternal truths apprehended by the intellectual soul into stirring imagery (as well as knowledge of future events, it should be noted).

While the interest of Ibn Sīnā in the creative imagination, like that of Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950) before him and Ibn Rushd after him, was primarily of a political nature, having to do with the character and capacities of the prophet and lawgiver, the imaginative power of the soul receives more substantial attention in later Islamic thought. Especially in that strand of Eastern post-Avicennian thought which came under the influence of Sufism, the world of imagination gains an independent prominence. Space does not allow for a treatment of this influential and important tradition: suffice it to say that in the wake of Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240) the whole of creation came to be viewed as an exercise of the divine imagination, even as the suggestion was floated that the sensible cosmos itself has only an imaginary existence and that the human imagination, too, might acquire a kind of demiurgic status.⁵⁰ Due to differences in imagining the world, human beings inhabit singular universes in addition to sharing them with each other.

Now there is a fine line between genius and madness in this regard, as the Arabic philosophers would readily acknowledge: the imagination's capacity for excitation could have unwelcome as well as salutary effects. Al-Fārābī offers the following examples. A somnambulist may get up and hit another person without there being anything in outward reality to provoke such a violent action, just as a sleeper's body may be subject to erotic arousal with no outside provocation. The explanation in both cases lies in the way the imagination, left to its own devices, can reproduce the motions of the soul needed to precipitate these actions by way of imitating the actual physical conditions that would produce the same effects in waking life.⁵¹ Likewise, the Ghazālīan *Jerusalem Ascent* notes that the insane are not capable of regulating their imaginative powers: they are feverishly engaged in an activity better kept under strict control. These people, as well as ones experiencing trouble with their gall bladder, are therefore liable to imagine as present non-existent and frightful things.⁵²

49 Of Ibn Sīnā's many treatments of the subject, see, e.g., *Shifā'*, *Metaphysics*, bk. X, chs. 1–2; cf. *Ma'ārij*, 115–117.

50 On these themes, see Chittick (1989) 115–118; the literature on the subject has become quite expansive in recent years, but a full philosophical treatment that takes into account the framework of Peripatetic faculty psychology remains to be done.

51 *On the Perfect State*, ch. 14, §5 Walzer.

52 *Ma'ārij*, 118.

To indicate what the interest in this strand of thought is for the theme of conceivability and possibility, I will close by recounting a twist to this explanation added later by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, better known as Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1641). Ṣadrā reasons that when someone claims to perceive a monster such as a ghou in the desert, this signals a projection of one's own fears onto outward reality:⁵³ and he cites the very fact that the soul can make judgements about entities which by definition *cannot* find instantiation in the world as proof of the soul's immateriality. Were this but a reference to fictional entities such as the griffon (*anqā'*) the contention would be readily intelligible: but Mullā Ṣadrā also wants to include explicit contradictions within the group of things over which the soul presides. Though the exact mechanisms of this determination are obscure, Mullā Ṣadrā's point clearly is directed against a thoroughly naturalistic Peripatetic epistemology. If the mind would truly take all of its cues from nature, then surely it could not be directed towards the impossible *qua* impossible.⁵⁴ While the Latin history of perceiving impossibilities and impossible entities has been told in some detail,⁵⁵ a similar history of the Arabic tradition has yet to be written. That is a story for another day.

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53 See Bonmariage (2002).

54 See *Al-hikma al-muta'aliyya fi al-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a*, vol. 1, 269–270. Already in the *Ma'ārij al-quds* it is stated that the *jinn* and the *shaitan* can only be perceived by the imagination and the formative power because they genuinely fall between the sensory and the intelligible, or the corporeal and the spiritual (*Ma'ārij*, 120). This is to say: they are middling creatures.

55 See Ebbesen (1986).

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STEN EBBESEN

By Necessity

Simoni Helsingensi, Magistro modorum, sive contingentis sive de necessitate sexagenario, obligatione amicitiae astrictus hoc sophisma de modo necessitatis dedicat Steno Haffnensis, sophista et coaevus

Ms Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College 611/341 is an English parchment manuscript from the late 13th or very early 14th century, containing V + 181 leaves measuring mm. 339 x 210 (leaf measured: 25). It is unitary, all parts having the same lay-out. A barely readable ex libris on 181^{vB} says “liber collegii annunciacionis beate marie in cantabrigia quod dicitur gunvyle halle”.¹ The ex libris was added in the 15th c., I believe. Contents:

I–IV ^v	Anonymus G&C611–I, <i>Quaestiones super Peri hermeneias</i> (cf. Ebbesen 1979)
1 ^r –24 ^v	Anonymus G&C611–II (Guillelmus Walcote?), <i>Quaestiones super Sophisticos Elenchos</i> (N° S78 in Ebbesen (1993) w. references to earlier literature; edition of questions 2–16—on equivocation—in Ebbesen (1998) 144–184)
25 ^r –47 ^{vB}	Anonymus, <i>Quaestiones super Analytica Priora</i> (List of questions in Ebbesen, forthcoming)
47 ^{vB} –60 ^{vB}	Anonymus, <i>Sophismata</i> GC611
61 ^r –106 ^v	Anonymus, <i>Quaestiones super Analytica Priora I</i> (List of questions in Ebbesen, forthcoming)
106 ^v –107 ^v	Anonymus, <i>Regulae Syllogismorum</i>
108 ^r –145 ^r	Anonymus, <i>Commentarium literale in Analytica Posteriora</i>
146–181 ^v	(Johannes de Tytyngsale sive Dydynsale), <i>Quaestiones super Ethica Nicomachea</i>

The collection on ff. 47^{vB}–60^{vB}, which I call *Sophismata GC611*, contains the following items:

1. Omne grammaticum de necessitate est homo 47^{vB}–50^{rA}
2. Tantum unum est 50^{rA}–51^{rA}
3. Si tantum pater est non tantum pater est 51^{rA}–54^{rB}

1 Thus transcribed by James (1908) 641—correctly, as far as I could judge when inspecting the ms in 1993.

4. Omnis phoenix est 54^{rB}–55^{rB}
5. Omne grammaticum de necessitate est homo 55^{rB}–56^{vA}
6. Omnis homo est 56^{vA}–58^{vA}
7. Omnis homo de necessitate est animal 58^{vA}–59^{rA}
8. Album potest esse nigrum 59^{rA}–60^{vA}
9. Impossibile potest esse verum 60^{vA}–vB

All items belong to the second half of the 13th century. One of the earliest may be item 8, which is an extract from a large sophisma by Peter of Auvergne, the complete form of which has been transmitted by mss Firenze, B. Medicea-Laurenziana, St. Croce 12 sin., 3: 65^{rA}–66^{rB} and Brugge, Stedelijke Bibliotheek 509: 96^{vB}–99^{vB}. Peter's sophisma was composed in Paris and should probably be dated to the 1270s. None of the remaining *sophismata* seems to exist in any other ms than G&C 611/341. Some, and possibly all of them, are English products. Andrea Tabarroni in an unpublished paper has analysed *Sophisma 4* and suggested a thematic reason for the inclusion of the Parisian *Sophisma 8* in this English collection. In fact, we may have a parallel case at the beginning of the ms, where an English question commentary on the *Sophistici Elenchi* is preceded by an extract from a Parisian-style series of questions on *Peri hermeneias*, presumably to illustrate how differently they tackle certain problems on the other side of the Channel.² If the different English items in the manuscript have approximately the same date, they were composed about the 1280s to 1290s, since the author of the questions on the *Ethics*, John of Tytynsale, was a fellow of Merton College in 1284–1285, while the questions on the *Elenchi* could possibly be the work of another Merton man, William of Walcote, who was a fellow of the college from 1291 to 1308.³

I here want to edit and briefly comment on the anonymous *Sophisma 7*.⁴

OMNIS HOMO DE NECESSITATE EST ANIMAL is among the most frequently treated sophismatic propositions in the 13th century. I know of 36 discussions of it in collections of *sophismata* from the period, several of them very extensive.⁵ Besides, a number of questions on Aristotelian works deal with the same proposition or the related

2 Cf. Ebbesen (1979).

3 For the attributions to John and William, see Lewry (1981) 242.

4 De Libera (2002) 210 speaks of “le *sophisma* de Cambridge, ms. Gonville et Caius 611/341, attribué à un certain ‘Guillaume’ que, en 1979, S. Ebbesen a appelé ‘*The Englishman*’”, but this is due to a misunderstanding. *The Englishman* was the way I in 1979 referred to the author of the questions on the *Elenchi*, whom Lewry (1981) 242 proposed to identify with William of Walcote because of the use of ‘Willelmus vocor’ as an example sentence. There is no indication that the author of the sophisma was called William and no reason to identify him with the author of the *Elenchi* questions.

5 The list is due to appear in S. Ebbesen & F. Goubier, *A Catalogue of 13th-century Sophismata*, to be published by Vrin's in Paris.

'homo est animal' *nullo homine existente*. In collections of little sophismata arranged by syncategoreme, OMNIS HOMO DE NECESSITATE EST ANIMAL appears among those containing an operator of necessity, but in the long *sophismata-cum-problematibus* the necessity issue is often dealt with in a somewhat oblique way, the question principally addressed being whether the subject term of a present-tense proposition needs to have an existing referent for the proposition to be true, and what could serve as a verifier in case there is no such referent.

There were good reasons for the schoolmen's interest in this particular sophisma. It would seem that on a *de re* reading the proposition must be false in all circumstances, because contingent beings cannot have any properties by necessity. It would also appear that it must be true on a *de dicto* reading if an Aristotelian-type natural science consisting of necessary axioms and theorems is to be possible. But then the simple 'omnis homo est animal' must be true even in the hypothetical situation that all men have been annihilated. And if so, what verifies it? A considered reply to whether the sophistic proposition is true requires deep thought about one's ontology, semantics and theory of knowledge.

Since Ebbesen & Pinborg (1970) a number of publications have discussed aspects of the rich 13th-century literature surrounding the sophisma and its problematics. Most recently de Libera (2002) has edited the OMNIS HOMO DE NECESSITATE EST ANIMAL of Anonymus Erfordensis, a high-quality arts master from about the middle of the 13th century, whom some have identified with Robert Kilwardby. The sophisma is number 4 in the collection transmitted by ms Erfurt, CA 4^o 328: 1^r-73^v. In his footnotes de Libera quotes several related texts. One of the questions touched on by de Libera in his introduction is whether it is still a plausible idea, as many scholars have felt for several decades, that Roger Bacon with his insistence on an actual referent for the subject term is typical of an English (Oxford) tradition, while Anonymus Erfordensis and the old Robert Kilwardby of 1277 are typical of a continental tradition of not considering lack of existence an impediment to truth. *Sophisma 7* certainly does not decide the issue, but it does add to the mounting evidence of important differences between Oxonian and Parisian ways of doing logic in the late 13th century.

Sophisma 7 of ms Gonville & Caius 611/341 has the following structure:

0. *Problemata proposita*: Circa illud sophisma plura quaerebantur. Primum fuit utrum haec sit vera nullo homine existente 'homo est animal'.
1. *Rationes principales*. 1.1 Quod sit vera, 1.2.1-2 Quod sit falsa.
2. *Prima responsio*. A brief *positio* "quod sit falsa", and an answer to 1.1. Marked as a response by the initial formula "ad problema *dicitur*".
3. *Contra 2*. Three arguments "quod sit vera".
4. *Secunda responsio*. 4.1 *Positio* "quod sit falsa", 4.2.1-4 *Ad rationes in contra-*

rium—against 1.1 and 3.1–3. Marked as a response by the initial formula “*Aliter respondetur ad problema*”. It is not clear whether the respondent is supposed to be the same as in § 2.

5. *Contra 2 vel 2 + 4*. Eight arguments “*quod sit vera simpliciter*”, one of which is an answer to 4.1.
6. *Contra 5*. Each of the arguments in 5 is countered, though an answer to 5.6 is certainly missing, while it is uncertain whether there is one to 5.3—if there is, it is placed after the answer to 5.4. If the sophisma reflects a real oral debate, § 6 must be what the respondent of § 4 said to defend his thesis against the arguments proffered by the opponent(s) in § 5.

From 0 through 2 everything is like in Parisian *sophismata* from about the 1270s–80s, but already in 3 there is a deviation from the Parisian format. One expects an attack, first on the respondent’s *positio*, then on his refutation of 1.1, and the opening words *Contra illa* seem to promise as much, but instead we find some direct arguments for an opposite *positio*. Similarly the eight arguments in 5 are not directly aimed at those in 4 (or in 2) though once again the section starts *Contra illa*. So, the one clear principle in 2–6 is that in even-numbered sections the arguments favour “*quod sit falsa*”, and in odd-numbered sections they favour “*quod sit vera*”. Finally, and most remarkably, there is no determination.

To my knowledge, similar true-false, yes-no ping-pong tournaments with no final determination are only found in *sophismatic* texts that for paleographic or other reasons can be associated with England. Since the hand-writing of G&C 611/341 is characteristically English, there is little reason to doubt that its *OMNIS HOMO DE NECESSITATE EST ANIMAL* is an English product.

It should be noticed that the sort of structure exhibited by *Sophisma 7* is one that may also be found in English *sophismata* which do have a determination. Thus *Sophisma 2* of the same collection, a *TANTUM UNUM EST*, has two main parts: (I) a disputation that proceeds in much the same manner as in *Sophisma 7* and (II) a determination starting with the formula “*Redeo. Hoc est sophisma TANTUM UNUM EST*”, and consisting of (1) a refutation of the responses given in the disputation, (2) a refutation of two further positions on the *sophisma*, (3) the solution proper, and (4) a refutation of the relevant *rationes principales*. One might be tempted to think that the English *sophismata* without a part II are simply mutilated texts, but there are too many of them for this to be a satisfactory explanation. Somehow the situation in the manuscripts must reflect a school practice of sometimes closing the oral debate after the respondent or respondents had had their say and had been subjected to some grilling.

Can we guess what the non-existing determination would say? Of course, not. But suppose that the disputation was carried out under the auspices of a master and that the responses were delivered by one or two bachelors, then chances are that the master

would feel obliged to criticise both responses, but it is by no means certain that the respondent(s) had chosen or been ordered to defend a view diametrically opposed to the master's. It is perfectly possible that the respondent(s) had tried to present what they thought was their master's view, but just had not done it sufficiently well. This is the type of situation we find in the above-mentioned *Sophisma 2* (TANTUM UNUM EST), in which the determination proper consists of two parts, one which, in fundamental agreement with the respondent(s), declares the sophismatic proposition to be plainly false, and a second part presenting the alternative view that it is false in one sense and true in another (the second view is introduced by the words "Alia est opinio quae maxime videtur esse probabilis").

The lesson, I think, is that texts like *Sophisma 7* cannot be used to show what anyone believed about the right solution to a certain problem at a certain time. They can, however, be used to show the way the philosophical discussion was carried out, which problems were central, and which arguments were considered important enough that they must at least be presented, albeit, perhaps, only to be refuted. Incidentally, while there is a deep-level similarity between the argumentation in *Sophisma 7* and Anonymus Erfordensis, there is very little surface similarity. But then, one or two generations separate the two texts, and the earlier one was probably composed at Paris, while the younger one seems to be an Oxford product.

As for the date of *Sophisma 7*, there is little to go by. I believe that it is probably from the 1280s or 1290s, but I have no strong arguments for my belief. Even if most of the items in the manuscript are from that period, the man who put together the collection of *sophismata* could easily have included one produced in an earlier decade than his own. The only internal piece of evidence I have noticed is the example 'Socrates non languet' in §6.6, which would seem to echo Moerbeke's translation of $\nu\omicron\sigma\epsilon\iota$ at *Categories* 6, 6a2 "non tamen simul aliquid languet et valet", where Boethius had written "sed nullus simul sanus est et aeger", and the composite edition has "sed nullus simul et sanus et aeger est".⁶ Moerbeke's text circulated together with his translation of Simplicius' commentary on the *Categories*.⁷ Since the translation of Simplicius' commentary is firmly dated to 1266, this year may reasonably be taken as a *terminus post quem* for our *sophisma*.

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6 See *Aristoteles Latinus* I, 16 (transl. Boethii), 57 (composita), 95 (Guillelmi).

7 See L. Minio-Paluello in *Aristoteles Latinus* I, lxxiii–lxxix.

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Anonymus GC6II, *Sophisma* 7

OMNIS HOMO DE NECESSITATE EST ANIMAL

Circa illud sophisma plura quaerebantur. Primum fuit utrum haec sit vera nullo homine C 58^{va}
existente 'homo est animal'.

1. *Rationes principales*

1.1. Et quod sit vera probatio: Veritas in propositione affirmativa causatur ex identitate
5 praedicati cum subiecto; sed posito quod nullus homo sit, praedicatum est idem cum
subiecto; ergo etc.

1.2. Ad oppositum:

1.2.1. Similis est dispositio rei in entitate et veritate; cum ergo per positionem ponitur
hominem non esse, non contingit vere enuntiari animal de ipso.

10 1.2.2. Item, in eo quod res est vel non est, est oratio vera vel falsa.¹

2. *Prima responsio*

2.0. Ad problema dicitur quod prima falsa est.

2.1. Et hoc probatur sic: quia in omni re ista se habent per ordinem, esse, intelligere et
significare, ita quod veritas in voce vel in sermone causatur a veritate in intellectu, et
15 veritas in intellectu a veritate in re. Sed nullo homine existente non est veritas in re, et
per consequens nec in intellectu nec in sermone.

2.2 *ad 1.1.* Ad primam rationem respondebatur per interemptionem minoris quod
animal non est idem homini homine non existente.

3. *Contra 2*

20 3.1. Contra illa arguebatur probando animal simpliciter esse idem homini sic: illud quod
est de essentia alicuius simpliciter est idem sibi; sed animal est de essentia hominis; ergo
etc.

3.2. Item, quae per se insunt, de necessitate insunt, per Aristotelem;² sed haec est per
se, quia praedicatum cadit in definitione subiecti; ergo etc.

13 probatur] ponitur C.

1 Aristoteles, *Cat.* 5, 4b8–10.

2 Aristoteles, *An. post.* I 4,73a21–26.

3.3. Item, Aristoteles in quarto Physicorum capitulo de tempore dicit quod aeterna non mensurantur tempore;³ veritas ergo necessariorum non dependet a tempore; illa ergo propositio ‘homo est animal’ est necessaria; ergo veritas eius non dependet a tempore, et ita homine non existente est illa propositio vera.

4. *Altera responsio*

5

4.1 *Positio*

Aliter respondetur ad problema ponendo falsitatem huius ‘homo est animal’ nullo homine existente, quia secundum Aristotelem similis est dispositio rei in entitate et veritate. Hoc patet, quia aeterna habent entitatem perpetuam et intransmutabilem, et
 C 58^{vb} ideo eorum veritas est intransmutabilis et perpetua; | et similiter, \quia/ contingencia 10
 habent entitatem indifferentem ad esse et non esse, ideo et habent veritatem consimilem; et consimiliter res transmutabiles habebunt veritatem consimilem, sc. transmutabilem. Aliud supponitur quod homo et animal significant veram rem et naturam. Tertio supponitur quod cum ‘homo’ significat veram rem et naturam, similiter et ‘animal’, compositio unit extrema ipsa ad invicem secundum naturam extremorum. Ideo ex 15
 istis concluditur quod cum ‘homo’ significat veram rem et veram naturam, quae per positionem ponitur non esse, et ‘animal’ significat veram rem et veram naturam, quae actualiter salvatur in aliis speciebus actualiter, tunc unitur haec vera res et natura non enti, et ideo propositio simpliciter falsa est.

4.2 *Ad rationes in contrarium*

20

4.2.1 *ad I.I.* Ad primam rationem dicebatur quod animal non est idem homini, quia animal est vera res et natura, et homo per positionem ponitur simpliciter esse non ens, et ideo propositio est falsa sicut prius.

4.2.2 *ad 3.I.* Ad argumentum in contrarium cum dicitur, “animal est de essentia hominis”, dico quod hoc falsum est, quia essentia hominis non est ipso corrupto. 25

4.2.3 *ad 3.2.* Ad aliud, cum dicitur quod haec est per se, dicitur quod non est per se posito quod homo non sit.

Ad probationem: “praedicatum cadit in definitione subiecti”—dicendum quod non habetur hoc ab Aristotele, sed dicit quod illud est per se quando praedicatum cadit in ratione dicente quod quid est;⁴ et secundum hoc quod prius visum est, quod quid 30

2 ergo] autem *malim.* 18 actualiter—actualiter] *alterutrum actualiter auctor delevisset, opinor, si bene textum relegisset.*

3 Aristoteles, *Phys.* IV 12, 221b3–5.

4 Aristoteles, *An. post.* I 4, 73a34–35.

est hominis corrumpitur ad corruptionem hominis, et ideo haec non est per se posito quod homo non sit ‘homo est animal’.

4.2.4 ad 3.3. Ad aliud de quarto Physicorum dicendum, cum dicit quod veritas necessariorum non dependet a tempore, concedendum est. Et cum dicit “haec est necessaria ‘homo est animal’”, negandum est, quia denotatur attribui vera res et natura non enti simpliciter, et ideo falsa est.

5. *Contra 4 vel 2 + 4*

Contra illa arguebatur primo probando quod esset vera simpliciter.

5.1. Haec est differentia inter quiditatem et essentiam: quiditas corrumpitur corrupta re cuius est, essentia autem manet semper. Sed ulterius arguo: cum essentia rei sufficiat ad veritatem propositionis, ut probabo, et essentia hominis semper manet, ergo haec erit simpliciter necessaria ‘homo est animal’. Probatio minoris per Aristotelem in quarto Metaphysicae haec est vera ‘homo est animal bipes’ quia hoc significat;⁵ haec essentia ergo sufficit ad veritatem propositionis.

15 5.2 ad 4.1. Item, cum dicit Aristoteles quod similis est dispositio etc., intelligit de veritate incomplexa, et tu concludis de veritate complexa, et ideo nihil ad propositum.

5.3. Item, terminus significat praeter omnem differentiam temporis; ita quod indifferenter extendat se ad praesentia, praeterita et futura; possunt ergo ‘homo’ et ‘animal’ stare sic indifferenter pro quolibet tempore, et possunt esse isti sensus propositionis quod
20 homo praesens sit animal praesens vel homo praeteritus animal praeteritum vel homo futurus animal futurum; dato ergo quod nullus homo sit, potest illa propositio esse vera ‘homo est animal’ ratione istius causae ‘homo praeteritus est animal praeteritum’ et simpliciter vera. Et hoc patet sic quia propositio habens plures causas veritatis si pro una potest verificari redditur vera.

25 5.4. Item, ‘homo non est asinus’ haec est vera per accidens; ergo habet reduci ad propositionem veram per se; non ad aliam quam ad illam ‘homo est animal’; ergo est semper vera.⁶

5.5. Item, si haec est falsa ‘homo est animal’, haec erit vera ‘homo non est animal’ et si haec est vera ‘homo non est animal’ haec erit vera ‘homo est non animal’, quia ad
30 negativam de praedicato finito sequitur affirmativa de praedicato infinito, et si homo

17 ita] et C. 20 vel] et C. 23 hoc] *lectio incerta, potius haec C.*

5 Aristoteles, *Metaph.* IV 4, 1006a28–32.

6 *Idem argumentum apud Anonymum Erfordensem, ed. de Libera (2002) 226.*

est non animal, homo est non homo, et ita oppositum praedicatur de opposito, quod est impossibile.

5.6. Item, contingentia non impedit necessitatem; cum ergo homine existente haec sit simpliciter necessaria ‘homo est animal’ et contingens est quod homo corrumpatur, ergo corruptio hominis non impedit necessitatem; ergo adhuc erit necessaria. 5

5.7. Item, adhuc, si haec est falsa ‘homo est animal’, cum per Aristotelem veritas istius ‘homo est animal’ reducitur ad illam propositionem ubi praedicatur idem de se ‘homo est homo’, et similiter veritas cuiuslibet propositionis reducitur ad illam ubi praedicatur idem de se per Aristotelem in quarto *Metaphysicae*; si ergo illa propositio est falsa ‘homo est animal’, reducitur ad illam propositionem quae est falsa per se ‘homo est homo’, erit ergo illa propositio per se falsa ‘homo est homo’ nullo homine existente. Sed quod haec non sit falsa ‘homo est homo’ homine non existente probatio, quia falsitas in propositione causatur ex repugnantia praedicati ad subiectum, quia homo est quoddam simplex intellectum comprehensum ab intellectu; si ergo esset hic repugnantia praedicati ad subiectum in eodem esset repugnantia, quod est | inconueniens. 10
C 59^A 15

5.8. Item, arguebatur sic: Supponebat primo per Aristotelem in libro *De anima* quod ab entibus sensibilibus manent species in sensu,⁷ aliter non contingit reminisci nec memorari; ex illa suppositione habebat quod corrupto homine adhuc manet species hominis penes intellectum. Supponebat aliud: res non quocumque modo est causa veritatis, sed res unde intellecta est. Supponebat tertium quod propositio est quidam effectus rationis. Tunc ex istis suppositionibus arguo sic: manente causa manet effectus, cum res secundum quod intellecta est causa veritatis in propositione, et res secundum quod intellecta est semper manet; ergo, cum propositio sit quidam effectus rationis, semper manebit eadem veritas in oratione. 20

6. *Contra* 5 25

Ad illas rationes dicebatur sic:

6.1 *ad* 5.1. Ad primam, cum arguebatur “homo est animal bipes quia hoc significat” dicebatur quod hoc non est sic intelligendum, sed quod hoc subiectum sit hoc praedicatum quia hoc subiectum significat hoc praedicatum—subiecto autem existente.

6.2 *ad* 5.2. Ad aliud dicitur quod non obstante quod Aristoteles loquatur ibi de veris 30

14 intellectum] *eodem compendio scriptum est quo* intellectu. 17–18 aliter—memorari *transponi debere mihi proposuit David Bloch*, ut ex illa suppositione habebat quod corrupto homine adhuc manet species hominis penes intellectum; aliter non contingit reminisci nec memorari. *legeremus*.

7 Aristoteles, *De an.* III 2, 425b24–25.

incomplexis, hoc non concludit quin possit habere veritatem in complexis veris sicut in veris incomplexis.

6.3 *ad* 5.4. Ad aliud dicebatur quod illa propositio ‘homo non est asinus’, quae est vera per accidens, reducitur ad illam propositionem ‘homo fuit animal’ vel aliquod tale.

5 6.4 *ad* 5.3? Ad aliud argumentum: quod ‘est’ importat talem compositionem quae quidem componit solum secundum possibilitatem extremorum, et hoc patet si dicatur ‘chimaera est chimaera’ li ‘est’ componit secundum naturam repertam in chimaera, et hoc denotat hoc praedicatum convenire huic subiecto secundum hoc quod sunt, et quia chimaera non habet esse nisi secundum quid sive in opinione, ideo tale esse huic
10 copulatur, copulatur enim esse solum secundum naturam extremorum, et cum homo sit animal et animal est vera res et natura, copulatur haec vera res et natura non enti, et ideo propositio est falsa simpliciter.

6.5 *ad* 5.5. Ad aliud negabatur illa consequentia ‘homo non est animal, ergo homo non est homo’ posito quod homo non sit.

15 6.6 *ad* 5.7. Ad aliud, “illa propositio ‘homo est animal’ reducitur ad illam propositionem ‘homo est homo’”—dicendum quod bene arguit, et concluderet argumentum si idem esset animal quod praedicatur de homine ipso existente et non existente; sed quia non est idem animal quod praedicatur, ergo etc.

Vel dicendum, cum sic dicitur quod falsitas in propositione causatur ex repugnantia
20 praedicati ad subiectum, dicebatur quod verum est; tamen hoc non prohibet quin ob aliam causam potest falsitas in propositione causari, ut propter non entitatem unius extremi; verbi gratia, ‘Socrates non languet’ potest dupliciter falsificari: aut quia Socrates est et non languet, aut quia Socrates non est etc. Similiter in proposito, ‘homo est animal’ potest falsificari dupliciter: aut quia homo est et non est animal, aut quia
25 homo non est et sic non est animal. Cum ergo per positionem ponitur hominem non esse, illa propositio ‘homo non est homo’ vel ‘homo est animal’ est falsa.

6.7 *ad* 5.8. Ad ultimum respondebatur et nega(ba)tur illa suppositio “veritas in propositione causatur ex hoc quod res intellecta causatur ex vera entitate rei”. Non enim sufficit ad veritatem in propositione quod extrema †mensurentur†, sed quod realiter et vere
30 extrema sint entia, et quod fuerit convenientia extremorum adinvicem, et ideo sicut prius, cum illae condiciones per positionem deficiunt, ista propositio est falsa ‘homo est animal’ posito quod nullus homo sit.

MIKKO YRJÖNSUURI

Types of Self-Awareness in Medieval Thought

What am I? There are many ways of addressing this question. The approach I take in this paper is to look closer at one's being aware of oneself—at self-awareness, that is. I will ask two main questions: What are the types of things that I can be aware of as being me? And what kind of thing is the “I” that is aware of oneself in different types of self-awareness? That is, I will try to give a picture of the different kinds of things that can occur either as objects or as subjects in the peculiar relation of being self-aware.

I will address the problem in relation to medieval texts. This is not because the aims of the paper would be exhausted in historical curiosity. Rather, I think that a closer look at the medieval material can illuminate the relevant philosophical issues as we face them now. Thus, my main aims lie in a strive towards a critical understanding of our own contemporary habits of thought concerning selfhood.

With self-awareness I mean here a cognitive relation¹ between a subject and an object such that the object appears to the subject as being the subject itself or at least a part of the subject. In a most ordinary sense, when I am aware of the strength of my arms at the moment of successfully lifting 200 pounds at the gym, I have self-awareness of my own arms. I feel them as my own arms. In this situation, I am a thinking subject who has a relation to a physical object such that the subject cognizes the object as a part of the subject himself.

Thus, I am not primarily discussing awareness of one's own thoughts. Rather, self-awareness of thought is just one special type of awareness that I will consider. I will proceed with the help of a four-fold distinction regarding the object of self-awareness, distinguishing the bodily self, the living sensitive and emotional self, the intellectual self, and the social self. The idea is that as a human being I can consider myself in these four ways. I am a physical object with a specific height, weight, temperature, and many other such properties. Also, I am a living animal that acts emotionally upon information perceived by the senses, not always thinking about what I am doing in any conceptual sense. Further, I am an intellectual entity capable of conceptual rational thinking and voluntary choices. Finally, I aim at my own best, and for this pursuit I

1 In the scope of this paper I cannot go into what counts as a “cognitive relation.” I am taking the term in the medieval way so that all sensory perceptions count as cognitive regardless of how simple the sensory system of the subject is. Thus, cognitive relations need not have a conceptual nature, but they do convey information.

need a view of what I am—and as I will show this may mean counting other people as parts of the whole whose best I strive for.

This fourfold division serves as the plot of the paper insofar as it concerns the objects of self-awareness. Consideration of the subjects will join the picture in a respective order. But before going into the discussion proper, two things need to be recognized. First, I am taking for granted that there is a self. This assumption, however, is not a very loaded one. Rather, I am simply following the medieval understanding. That I have a self means little more than that I exist. And as the medieval authors usually thought, this only means that I exist as a worldly human. This does not imply existing as a single subject of thought with an inner world—or anything else of such a mysterious nature.

Second, there is a specific contemporary philosophical problem that I am addressing. In the recent decades, it has been widely recognized that the human mind is not an entity independent of the body. A lively philosophical discussion has ensued. As it seems to me, a crucial misunderstanding has nevertheless disturbed the discussion. It has mainly proceeded with the help of the term ‘embodiment’ and often concerns the self-awareness that includes *having* a body—rather than awareness of oneself as *being* a corporeal object.

Literally, the term ‘embodiment’ means that there first is a mind, which then gets a body. Even though practically no one really believes that this is the temporal or even logical order in which humans come into the world, much of the philosophical discussion assumes that we should seek for ways of understanding how thought is “embodied.” Medieval thinkers thought in the other direction. They spoke of *ensoulment*: the idea is that there is primarily a body that also has a soul. Thus, we ought not look at our relation to our body mediately through our relation to our mind. Rather, we are bodies first and foremost.

Furthermore, I will try to point towards a philosophical understanding of self-interested cognition that has at its core a bodily nature. As bodies, we cognize ourselves sufficiently well in order to take basic care of ourselves even without thinking much about the practicalities. To live, we do not necessarily need intellectual understanding and perhaps not even thought. That we are thinking things capable of understanding our life more deeply is only a superstructure added upon the basic level of living an autonomous life. While early modern authors like René Descartes may still have understood and respected this fact, it seems to be all too often forgotten in the contemporary discussions in philosophy of mind and even in phenomenology. Here I follow the medieval authors in taking seriously the fact that we are bodies first. We get minds only when the body is mature enough.

Feeling One's Own Body: Aquinas and Olivi

Towards the late thirteenth century, the Aristotelian psychological theories gained dominance in the medieval schools. Thomas Aquinas was one of the most prominent scholars of Aristotle at that time, and his psychological theories became very important in the late Middle Ages and even after that. There were, of course, alternatives. As it seems to me, Peter John Olivi's model is in many respects philosophically the most interesting one.

Here I will pay special attention to Olivi's theory of the sense of touch, since it amounts to a theory of an elementary kind of evaluative bodily self-awareness. However, to understand Olivi's model properly, we need a picture of the thirteenth-century Aristotelian theory on the topic. Let us thus first have a look at Aristotle's presentation of how the sense of touch works and Aquinas' understanding of it.

According to Aristotle, the sense of touch is similar to other four senses in being directed at external things. Aristotle's idea is that in any sensory perception the object affects the sensory subject through a medium. Thus, in the case of seeing or hearing the air serves as the medium and a color or a sound affects the eye or the ear through air. Aristotle extends this model to cover also the other three senses, including the sense of touch.

Although sensory perception is directed at external things, we can of course perceive parts of ourselves just like we can perceive parts of other things. We can hear our own hands clapping and we can see our own fingers. However, such perception of oneself does not really count as self-awareness. To see why, we only need to take into account the fact that when I, for example, look at my hand I see the hand as I would see any external object, as far as the visual perception is at issue. I do not *see* the hand as a part of me, though I may of course look at it with different eyes because I *feel or know* that it is a part of me.

Vision has been a central metaphor in theories of self-awareness since Plato. It is very eloquently pointed out in the Platonist dialogue *Alcibiades I* (132d–133b) that the eyes cannot see themselves except through a mirror or some other reflecting surface. In the dialogue, Socrates uses this fact to show that in order to know himself, a person needs a discussion partner. In later use, the metaphor is found interesting, but sometimes it is rejected. Augustine, for example, points out in his *On the Trinity* (X.3.12) that for knowing one's own mind no mirror is needed.

Aristotle too was acquainted with the metaphor. In *Sense and Sensibilia* (2, 437a23–b10) Aristotle however considers a more literal possible case of the eye seeing itself, and this case is more interesting for us here, since it concerns the possibility of a bodily sensory organ having perception of itself. If an eye is hit either when it is closed or in the dark, light appears to flash in the eye. This light is, according to the argument considered by Aristotle, the eye itself in some way. It is not, anyway, anything external.

The inference would thus be that in this case we see the real nature of the eye: fire. Aristotle himself does not accept that the eye would consist of fire. As he develops the example, he takes up the problem of why the eye would see itself only in such special circumstances, if it is at all capable of seeing itself. According to Aristotle, there cannot be any direct perception where the seer and the seen would be the same. He claims that in the quick movement of the eye caused by the hit an object becomes as it were two, and thus “the eye sees itself in the above phenomenon as it does so in reflexion.”²

In his commentary on the passage, Aquinas agrees with Aristotle. He ponders how it is possible that there is movement fast enough to make the eye itself seeming to be outside itself; light proceeds instantaneously, after all. Aquinas refers to Alexander of Aphrodisias’ solution that what in fact is happening is that one part of the eye sees another part that is misplaced by the movement. In any case it is taken to be clear that there is no perception such that the perceiver would be the same as the perceived. Aquinas provides also a theoretical explanation of the necessity of the difference between the subject and the object in sensory perception. He refers to Aristotle’s *De anima* II (see esp. ch. 7, 419a11–30 and ch. 11, 423b20–22) and tells that if the eye would consist of fire, it could not see fire. Sense power must be in potentiality that which is to be sensed, and then altered by the object through a medium. If the eye would consist of fire, it could not be altered into fire. Even more generally, no sense organ can sense itself, since it cannot be altered into that which it already is. Also, Aquinas’ Aristotelian theory requires that the sense organ is separated from the object by a suitable medium that mediates the perceptible species to the organ. There has to be a medium between the subject and the object of sensation.³

As a result, Aquinas becomes committed to a theory in which all sensations represent the objects as external things. Thus, the external senses do not constitute bodily self-awareness. Rather, they constitute awareness of external objects. We have seen that this is the case in vision. More interestingly, this is true also of taste and touch, which are contact senses. In tasting, the tongue appears to be in contact with the object that is tasted. It does not taste its own savor. The tasted object is the food, which is not a part of the tongue although it is inside the mouth or even the tongue itself. Also in touching, the tangible object is not perceived as a part of the self.

However, the case of the sense of touch is somewhat special. In *De anima* II 11, Aristotle struggles to build a picture of what is the medium and what is the organ of touch. As he points out, there is an important difference between touching, on the one hand, and seeing and hearing on the other:

2 I am using the revised Oxford translation (1984).

3 For Aquinas’s commentary of Aristotle’s *On Sense and What is Sensed* and *On Memory* (*Sententia libri De sensu*), see, e.g., pp. 32–36 in White’s translation (2005). See also Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle’s “On Sense Perception”* (15, 5–20, 13), transl. Towey, 28–31.

... in the perception of objects of touch, we are affected not *by* but *along with* the medium; it is as if a man were struck through his shield, where the shock is not first given to the shield and passed on to the man but the concussion of both is simultaneous (423b14–16).

From our point of view here, these lines take a position on two crucial issues. First, there is a difference between touch and sight in the way the sensory object affects the medium and the sense organ. It is not very easy to see what the difference between being affected *by* and *along with* exactly is. As Aquinas points out in his commentary on the passage, it is not an issue of succession in time, since also vision is instantaneous. There is, nevertheless, a quite understandable sense in which the visible object first influences the air and then the air influences the eye, while in touching the object influences the sense organ together with the medium. As Aquinas puts it, in vision “the medium is present of necessity, whilst it is only as it were an accidental accompaniment of touch.” The medium serves different roles in the cases of vision and touch. Most importantly, though, it is to be noted that the medium is present in both cases.⁴

As Aristotle further explains his example, we are to understand that the flesh is the medium of touch.⁵ Thus, the flesh seems to take the place of the shield of the example, while the heart (or whatever is the organ of touch) takes the part of the man behind the shield. This is the second important issue tackled on these lines. According to Aquinas’ explanation, Aristotle does admit that the flesh, the medium of touch, is *in fact* a natural part of the perceiver. However, it seems that neither Aristotle nor Aquinas believed that in tactile perception one would *perceive* the flesh as a part of oneself any more than the soldier would take the shield to be a part of him. Quite noteworthy, Aristotle uses the first person pronoun for the sense organ, the heart. Thus, in touching something, the flesh is not perceived as a part of the subject. Indeed, the flesh is apparently not perceived at all. At least the soldier appears to perceive the shock without perceiving the shield with it. In Aristotle’s theory, touch is similar to the other senses in not constituting genuine bodily self-awareness, because even in the case of this sense we locate ourselves as cognitive subjects rather than corporeal objects. This does not amount to bodily self-awareness.

To be more exact, with “bodily self-awareness” I mean here perception of some bodily object so that the perceived object is perceived as identical with or as a part of the perceiving subject itself. In the Aristotelian system, the five senses are the means by

4 For Aquinas’ commentary on Aristotle’s *De anima* (*Sentencia libri De anima*), see, e.g., the translation by Foster & Humphries (1996) 168.

5 In *De sensu* II and in *De anima* II II, the organ of touch is not flesh but some internal organ. In *De partibus animalium* II (647a19 and 653b25), however, Aristotle takes the view that it is the flesh, which doubles as the medium (see 653b28).

which we get to know bodily things, and none of them gives us a perception of any bodily thing with the special quality of being a part of oneself. No object of sensation is perceived as being the subject of the same sensation. Thus, Aristotle does not offer a theory of how we perceive the qualities of our bodies as our own qualities. He has an explanation of how we perceive heat in the hands, but it seems that he did not elaborate the peculiarity of feeling heat in *one's own* hands. At least insofar as I know, Aristotle does not comment on whether the oneness is felt. He has no theory of bodily self-awareness.

This kind of Aristotelian picture of the sensory system seems to be reflected even in most twentieth-century philosophical accounts of sensory perception. It is generally assumed that sense perception concerns exclusively external objects, and self-awareness has to be accounted for in a different way.

When we turn to the medieval context, we find an interestingly different situation. The Aristotelian theory of sensation is combined with other philosophical traditions and, perhaps more interestingly, with medical traditions developed intensively by scholars writing in Arabic. This results also in a more elaborate philosophical theory of bodily self-awareness. One especially interesting medieval Latin discussion is Peter John Olivi's theory of the sense of touch (*sensus tactus*) in question 61 of the second book of his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.⁶

According to Olivi, the sense of touch can be identified as the faculty by which one perceives certain qualities of one's own body as the qualities of a bodily object. Even more interestingly, Olivi makes it clear that with the sense of touch one identifies one's own body not only as an object but also as oneself. The sense of touch perceives what it perceives as belonging to the sensory subject itself. Unlike Aristotle, who thought that the primary object of touch is the object that is in contact with one's skin, Olivi thought that the primary object is a part of one's own body. That is, with the sense of touch we perceive our own bodies as our own bodies. That is, we have sensory self-awareness of ourselves as bodies. Let us take a closer look at this model.

The explicit aim of Olivi's discussion is to find the identifying criteria of the sense of touch and to make clear the unity of this sense. Olivi rejects the Aristotelian idea that all sense faculties are to be distinguished by their proper sensibles. This holds, according to Olivi, for the other four senses. Vision is about color, hearing is about sound. The case of the sense of touch is different: there is no single proper sensible. The principle by which we distinguish this sense from the others is not any similarity between the perceived qualities. Rather, its identifying criterion is that it is the sense of self-perception.⁷

6 Peter John Olivi, II *Sent.*, q. 61, 574–585.

7 Olivi, II *Sent.*, q. 61, 578: "Dicunt enim quod proprium objectum tactus est intrinsecus status sui organi, et ideo omnia illa quae ipsum intrinsecus variant vel afficiunt sunt objecta sensus tactus."

The qualities felt by the sense of touch are nevertheless basically the same for Olivi as for Aristotle: the opposite qualities of heavy and light, hot and cold, moist and dry, hard and soft, dense and fine. Locations and movements can as well be felt with the sense of touch. But while Aristotle thought of how these qualities are perceived in external objects, Olivi thought that we primarily feel the qualities of our own body, and thereby also secondarily the immediate causes of these qualities. Thus feeling the heat at a fireplace comes about in Olivi's view only through a bodily self-perception. In order to feel the heat of the fire you must feel it in some part of your body and as your own quality. You feel the heat of the fire through feeling that you yourself get warmer. Furthermore, Olivi includes among his primary examples of what can be felt with the sense of touch very specific bodily disorders like itches, swells and fever. These seem quite natural examples concerning the awareness of oneself as a body.⁸

If understood in the Olivian way, the sense of touch can to some extent be compared to the theory of proprioception that was developed in the twentieth century. The sense of proprioception is the sense by which one feels the movement and position of one's bodily members. It is easy to understand that this sense is especially important to dancers, but in fact any person relies on it for any bodily movement. According to a common twentieth-century example, you know where your feet are under the table without looking at them. And when you walk and move your feet, you do not have to look at them in order to know how they move. The touch between the ground and the feet does not suffice to explain the knowledge. Thus, there is a way of feeling your own body that is not dependent on any external perception. Olivi too makes it clear that people normally perceive the locations and movements of their bodily members in an immediate way. He thought that these perceptions ought to be classified under the Aristotelian category of sense of touch.

In proprioception, the body is felt as one's own. In this sense, it is a sense of bodily self-awareness. Here I wish to emphasize that in such bodily self-awareness the qualities felt are the ordinary passive qualities that also external bodies have. In feeling how your feet move, the movement itself is no different from the movement of any external thing. Your way of feeling your own movement is different from feeling the movement of an external object, because you feel the movement so that you are aware that it is

8 *Ibid.*, 574: "Primo, quia multa per tactum apprehenduntur quae non minus differunt genere quam obiecta diversorum sensuum, utpote, grave et leve, calidum et frigidum, humidum et siccum, durum et molle, densum et subtile, et item multiplex dispositio et indispositio proprii organi et totius corporis; nam gravedines indigestionum et inflationum et apostemationum et calores febriles et corporis inanitatem et indigentiam et satietatis plenitudinem et varios pruritus carnis membrorumque agilem mobilitatem vel contrariam tarditatem eorumque constans robor ac inconstantem debilitatem eorumque scissuram vel integritatem ... videmur sensu tactus sentire, quae utique non minus ab invicem differunt quam differant a colore vel sono." Cf. also *ibid.*, 582–583.

you yourself who is moving. Also, the heat you feel in your hand is just the same kind of heat as in a fire outside your body.

As Olivi describes the sense of touch, this sense perceives the body as a corporeal entity with ordinary corporeal qualities. But with the sense of touch you are immediately aware of the corporeal qualities of your body in a more primary way than of the similar qualities in any other thing. According to Olivi's theory you cannot feel tactile qualities of external objects without feeling corresponding qualities in your own body. Olivi is somewhat unclear about how exactly the external tactile qualities are perceived, but he is clear that what is primarily perceived are qualities of one's own body. You feel the heaviness of a stone, for example, through feeling how it pulls your hands towards the centre of the earth.⁹

According to Olivi's theory, the sense of touch does not concern the states of the soul. The organ of the sense of touch perceives its own states, but it perceives only corporeal states. It does not perceive that it is perceiving.¹⁰ In this sense, the sense of touch carries no psychological self-awareness: through the sense of touch we are not aware of ourselves as cognitive subjects. But Olivi makes it very clear that the bodily qualities perceived by the sense of touch are perceived as one's own qualities. Even further, they are perceived as qualities constituting one's bodily welfare. Apparently Olivi's idea is that even proprioception is felt in terms of success in intended motion and thus is in a way related to welfare. According to Olivi, you literally *feel* that you are a corporeal thing and you *feel* how you are. What is at issue is bodily self-awareness that has a relation to bodily self-interest.

Olivi is very explicit about the idea that all perception by the sense of touch is evaluative. Feeling heat in a hand, for example, is not just feeling a temperature in an objective way. It may either be feeling that one's own hand recovers from coldness or that it is becoming excessively hot. Some such special character of the perception is even greater when you feel that you have fever. All the perceptions by the sense of touch carry some content such that one's body is changing towards a more appropriate state or away from it. We not only feel how we are, but we feel it in relation to how we should be. Bodily self-awareness is evaluative at the very basic level.

- 9 The hand does not perceive heaviness by becoming heavy (*ibid.*, 577–578): “Secundo, quando manus sentit grave pondus plumbi vel lapidis, non dicitur ex hoc fieri gravis, quamvis quondam inclinationem accipiat versus centrum.” Olivi answers, “diversis potentiis tactus servit idem organum secundum diversas sui dispositiones, puta, ... tactui gravium et levium secundum hoc quod est ad varia loca inclinabile.”
- 10 *Ibid.*, 581–582: “Pro quanto autem tactus intimius sentit quam ceteri sensus, pro tanto virtuales aspectum suum et sui organi intimius reflectit super suum organum. Non tamen potest ipsum reflectere super intrinsecam et spirituales essentiam ipsius potentiae nec super eius intrinsecum actum, quia hoc est proprium potentialium superiorum.”

It seems that Olivi has a double aim in his theory of the sense of touch. On the one hand, he tries to find space within the Aristotelian system of senses for the perception of oneself as a corporeal object among other objects. On the other hand, he aims at explaining how we feel not only that we have a body but also how we are doing in terms of the body. Similarly to all other animal functions, he describes the sense of touch in relation to the teleological constitution of the animal. In other words, he describes the bodily type of self-awareness. He wants to draw a picture where one feels oneself as a body, and even as a thing whose perfection and well-being depend on a variety of corporeal qualities.

Psychological Self-Awareness and Its Unity

It seems that in Aristotelian medieval thought the general feel of oneself as an individual subject with a psychological constitution was typically located in the so-called common sense. This faculty is in the Aristotelian theory primarily responsible for collecting the perceptions of different particular senses together in order to form a unified picture of the perceived world. Although the reasons and arguments for positing such a faculty usually concern perception of the external world, it seems that the same faculty is attributed a similar function in the internal sphere as well. The subject's sensory perceptions, its emotions and its purposeful activities are represented in the common sense.

The eyes do not see their own seeing, but the common sense perceives whether the eyes see and, if they do, what they see. Here my particular emphasis is on the claim that the common sense perceives whether the eyes see.¹¹ Furthermore, it seems that in the medieval thought it was usually assumed that the common sense perceives the activities of the particular faculties of the soul as the activities of the same subject itself. That is, when the common sense perceives that the eyes see, it perceives more exactly that one sees with one's own eyes. This is different from perceiving that someone else perceives with her own eyes. There seems to be a kind of ownness involved in this perception. Thus, we are dealing with a theory of how the self-awareness of oneself as a cognitive subject comes about. Let us call this psychological self-awareness.

The medieval authors accepted the Aristotelian view that the common sense is a faculty of the animal soul. This is noteworthy, because insofar as it is a faculty that is capable of forming a unified first-person image of the acting subject itself, it seems that also animals have this capability. In Olivi's commentary of the *Sentences*, for

11 Cf. Aristotle's *De anima* III 1–2 and, e.g., Aquinas' commentary on these chapters. Aquinas is clearer than Aristotle on the view that it is the common sense which "sees" that one sees. This comes as the result of a harmonizing process of *De anima* with *De sensu*.

example, such a capability is explicitly attributed to certain animals like dogs or snakes.¹² Apparently the medieval tradition concerning animal self-awareness derives from the Stoic theories where the sense of the self was thought to be a very fundamental and basic feature of the animal nature, distinct from rationality that is specific to humans. For example, Seneca's Letter 121 discusses the animal sense of the self in the Stoic vein.¹³ He attributes even to lower animals like bees the strive to take care of themselves. The bee perceives its nature and tries to avoid what is dangerous to it because it has a special relation to itself. Unlike many post-Cartesian philosophers, neither ancient nor medieval thinkers used self-awareness as theoretical criterion to distinguish humans from other animals.

Avicenna takes up the issue of the unity of the self. He claims, "Every animal is aware of being one soul." However, the soul has different faculties. How does the unity then come about? The example that Avicenna takes up is a sensory perception and the emotional reaction based on it. These take place in different faculties of the soul. Why, then, is there a unity here so that the same subject both perceives and reacts emotionally? Specifying to the human case, Avicenna writes, "Moreover, we sometimes say 'When I perceived such-and-such, I became angry.' Since this is a true statement, it is one thing that perceived and then became angry." Whence does this unity come? Or more exactly, how does the perception of the unity take place?¹⁴

Avicenna's solution is that there must be one faculty which perceives all the activities of the various faculties of the soul as its own. There is one thing by which I both perceive what I perceived and by which I become angry. It also seems clear that Avicenna thought that this unity is something that all animals have: self-awareness of oneself as a single cognitive subject is not distinctively human.

As Avicenna's problem is received in the academic Latin community, a discussion ensues concerning the specific location of the awareness of the unity of the self. Quite understandably, the common sense is often put forward as the unifying faculty at the level of the animal soul.

Perhaps the most illustrative discussion of the role of the common sense as a faculty of embodied self-awareness is Thomas Aquinas' discussion of conscience in his *On Truth*, q. 17. He begins the discussion by making a distinction between knowing what

12 Olivi, II *Sent.*, q. 59, 587–588: "Ergo sicut illam appetitivam oportet dominari omnibus membris et sensibus quos ad suos actus applicat vel ab eis retrahit: sic oportet unam iudicativam sibi assistere quae de omnibus actibus eorum iudicet et eorum delectationes vel dolores advertat et alteram alteri praeferat vel praeferendam ostendat. Praeterea, quando canis vel serpens pro conservatione capitis exponit aliud membrum aut pro conservatione totius exponit aliquam partem, tunc praefert totum parti et caput alteri membro."

13 Seneca's letters were well known in the Middle Ages, though it is difficult to say whether this letter was taken as a direct source for thought concerning animal self-awareness.

14 *Najat* part II, ch. 6; see, e.g., Khalidi (2005) 53–55.

one does and giving a moral evaluation of it. It seems that in the first-mentioned use the Latin word *conscientia* is best translated as “consciousness” rather than “conscience.” The latter use is better captured by the translation “conscience” that has moral connotations. Aquinas’ description of the first meaning is that “we are said to have consciousness of an act inasmuch as we know that the act has been done or has not been done.” He takes some examples of the use of the word from his Latin Bible. To pick up one of them, in Ecclesiastes 7, 22 the Revised Standard Version has “Your heart knows that you yourself have cursed others.”¹⁵ The point that Aquinas wants to make clear is that in order to give a moral evaluation of an act you must know what you have done, or in other words, you must be conscious of having done it. This seems to amount to self-awareness of oneself as a living active subject—an ensouled being. Aquinas locates the faculty of consciousness to the sensory part of the soul. As he explains, we know our own former acts through the memory, and we perceive the present acts by the senses.¹⁶

Aquinas addresses very specific problems in his explanation of the awareness of one’s own individual acts of intellectual thought. In the commentary on Aristotle’s *On Memory and Remembering* Aquinas asks how one remembers intellectual thoughts. How exactly is it that you remember that you understood something yesterday at noon? Such a remembering is a different thing from the ability to bring the thought back. If you understood, say, a mathematical theorem, you may well be able to reformulate and apply the theorem, and thus to recall it in that sense without remembering that you first understood it yesterday at noon. However, there is nothing personal in such capability to recall the theorem. On the contrary, the theorem comes back as a universal, as something which would be just the same theorem in anyone else’s mind. But remembering how you understood it yesterday at noon is remembering something about you yourself. In this remembrance, you cognize yourself as an entity capable of understanding mathematics. This is, thus, an awareness of yourself as an intellectual being.¹⁷

According to Aquinas, we remember our particular acts of intellectual thought through the phantasms (mental images) attached to them. Keeping to our example, one remembers one’s understanding the mathematical theorem yesterday at noon because of the phantasms involved. Such memories are in the animal soul in Aquinas’ view. As

15 The Vulgata translation has “scit enim conscientia tua, quia et tu crebro maledixisti aliis.”

16 Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 17, a. 1, resp.: “... et secundum quidem primum modum applicationis dicimur habere conscientiam alicuius actus, in quantum scimus illum actum esse factum vel non factum; sicut est in communi loquendi usu, quando dicitur, hoc non est factum de conscientia mea, idest nescio vel nescivi an hoc factum sit vel fuerit ... in prima applicatione qua applicatur scientia ad actum ut sciatur an factum sit, est applicatio ad actum particularem notitiae sensitivae, ut memoriae, per quam eius quod factum est, recordamur; vel sensus, per quem hunc particularem actum quem nunc agimus, percipimus.”

17 Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri De sensu (De memoria)*; transl. Macierowski.

he saw it, we have a unified picture of all our past and present activities at the level of the animal soul. This includes the intellectual dimension of the self.

Also in *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 76, a. 1.) Aquinas points out that humans perceive that they have an intellectual soul capable of higher thought as their own power. All the concepts that he uses in this context appear intellectual, but still it seems to follow from Aquinas' discussion of memory and conscience that perceiving that the intellectual soul is personally one's own takes place at the lower level of common sense and the corporeal memory. For Aquinas, we are bodily subjects and have the feel of individuality through our animal souls. He does not discuss how we perceive that we have ensouled bodies, because that is what we principally are. He does discuss why and how we perceive that we have also the intellectual powers, because as he sees it, the individual ownness of the intellectual powers is not as immediately clear as the ownness of the ensouled body. The intellect is just a capacity that we are aware of having, and Aquinas seems to have given serious consideration to what he calls the Averroist view: that all humans share the same intellect. For him, the individuality of intellectual thought had to be shown, it could not be taken for granted.

Intellectual Self-Awareness: Medieval Reactions to Avicenna's Problem

It seems that in the medieval academic work in Latin, Avicenna's problem concerning the unity of the cognitive subject was taken seriously, but it took a somewhat revised form. Philosophers put it in a form that can be schematized as the following argument:

1. I see with the bodily eyes.
2. I understand with the intellectual power.
3. The intellectual power cannot see.
4. Understanding is not a bodily operation.
5. I see and understand with self-awareness of the same self in these acts.
6. Therefore, I have at least the ensouled body and the intellectual power as my parts.

The crucial edge of the argument is to show that despite the diversity of different functions performed by different parts of the human being, the self is a unity. While 3 and 4 are theoretical premises that can be argued for, 1, 2 and especially 5 are experiential facts that need not really be argued for. Thus, the argument can be seen as a way of referring to an awareness of the unity of the self, rather than a theoretical proof of the unity. Given the experiential nature of the argument, it is no surprise that different philosophers took different stances towards it.

Aquinas and Olivi form an interesting pair in this respect. As we saw, Aquinas contends that this argument proves that the intellect is a part of the person. He took

it for granted that seeing and thereby all the bodily operations are functions of the person. For him, the embodied life was that which determined the individuality of the person, and he felt he needed an argument to counter what he called the Averroist view. This was the view that the intellect is universal by its nature, and humans are individuals only by their body. In Aquinas' view, we do experience our intellectual thought as individually ours despite its universal character, and thus it must be that it is not performed by a universal intellect but by ourselves individually. We have, thus self-awareness of the intellectual power.¹⁸

Olivi runs the argument in the other direction. He thinks humans primarily experience themselves as free intellectual entities. He uses the argument to show that the body is an integral part of the self, and not just an instrument the mind uses. Olivi also adds digestion to the list. In the experience of eating, one is not just filling one stomach or another, but one's own stomach which is experienced as a part of oneself. The stomach is not just an instrument needed for eating, but a part of the person; in a way, the aim of eating is the welfare of the stomach. However, Olivi makes it very clear that he thinks that it is the intellectual part of the soul that experiences all these operations as its own. That is, as acting subjects we identify ourselves with the intellectual part of the soul. According to Olivi's argument, no other part of the soul would be able to apprehend all the different operations the person performs.¹⁹

Generalizing from the human case, Olivi's claim means that self-identification must always be performed by the highest part of the soul. In this way, Olivi seems to come close to the Stoic idea of the "ruling part" or *hêgemonikon* as that which one primarily is. It is interesting to note that the highest part of the soul is intellectual only in the case of humans. In lower animals, self-awareness is to be located at the common sense and cannot achieve qualities that are possible only for an intellectual being. Nevertheless, even a worm or an oyster has its own limited type of self-awareness.²⁰

Olivi explicitly locates the core of human personhood in self-reflexivity. A person, he says, is something that "fully returns and remains in itself, or is perfectly reflected in

18 *Summa theologiae* I, q. 76, a. 1, resp.

19 Olivi, II *Sent.*, q. 51, 122: "Unde dicit: ego qui intelligo video vel comedo; et utique non potest dicere nisi per potentiam intellectivam, quia nulla alia potentia potest apprehendere utrosque actus nisi ipsa."

20 Cf., e.g., Olivi, *ibid.*, q. 62, 590, where the issue is the presence and location of common sense in a simple worm or an oyster: "... ubi sit organum sensus communis, et sumamus hoc in animalibus perfectis, quia in quibusdam, puta, in annulosis vermibus, non apparet sensibilis distinctio organi sensus communis ad organum tactus quem solum habere videntur; nam in conchilibus posset dici quod forsitan est in eorum radicali parte per quam suae conchae vel testae cohaerent."

itself.”²¹ This is possible only for an intellectual being. Indeed, Olivi argues that intellectual self-awareness is categorically different from any other kinds of self-reflexivity, because only an incorporeal intellectual thing can fully reflect upon itself. As Olivi sees it, however, the core of this self-reflexivity is not cognitive. Rather, its core is in the capability of the will to direct itself as a self-mover. The real core of human personhood for Olivi is not in the human capability of perceiving that one is a thinking thing, but in the capability of attending to one’s own choices as free choices that depend only on oneself. This is something that requires the self-awareness of oneself as a subject: as an active subject making choices, not so much a passive thinking subject.

Perhaps the most surprising reaction to the above schematized argument comes from William Ockham. As he saw it, we do not have the experience of a unified individual subject. That is, Ockham rejects ζ in the above argument. In his view, the Averroist view that the subject of intellectual thought is universal cannot be experientially rejected. We do not experience our thoughts as individually ours. Rather, the Averroist view is refuted by the fact that people disagree. If there are two obviously contradictory beliefs, they cannot be held by the same subject. Thus, there is a multiplicity of subjects. One especially interesting feature in Ockham’s view is that it opens the possibility of there being multiple subjects within the same person. Unfortunately, Ockham does not go deeper in the discussion. Furthermore, he seems to accept that humans have individual intellectual souls, which guarantees the unity and the personal identity of the person.²²

For our purposes, Ockham’s denial of the awareness of the unity of the self is the most interesting part of his view. He seems to be the medieval representative of a theory denying that we have awareness of ourselves as unitary intellectual subjects of thought. Olivi and Aquinas share the opinion that we have self-awareness of that kind. The difference lies more in how they thought about the core of what it is to be a person. But neither of them located it in the self-awareness of oneself as a passive thinker, as Descartes is often interpreted to have done. Such an idea of what it is to be a self seems not to come up in the medieval discussions. Fair enough, it is not Descartes’ idea either, but that would be a topic for another paper.

The Social Self and the Question of Self-Sacrifice

Like all animals, humans are selfish. They care for their own best. Above, we have looked into some different types of self-awareness. Let me now put the question, which of these selves is the self that is at issue when one aims at one’s own best? Does self-

21 *Ibid.*, q. 59, 526: “Item, personalitas seu persona est per se existentia in se ipsam plene rediens et consistens seu in se ipsam perfecte reflexa.”

22 William Ockham, *Quodlibet* I, q. 11, OTh IX, 66–68; transl. Freddoso & Kelley, 58–60.

interest concern the interests of the intellectual or the animal level of the soul, or rather the interests of the body? What is the self at issue in self-interest?

One way of answering this question would spring from the idea that the different selves are not distinguishable. At least for the intellectual self, this line is not, however, the medieval one, since in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries philosophers mostly thought that the intellectual part of the soul is incorporeal. According to the settled doctrine of the Church, at death the soul and the body are separated. This implies, of course, also that the soul and the body are different parts of the self, and you may care more for one of them.

Another way to answer the question is, thus, that the above discussed types of self are really parts of your self. In being selfish you care for the different parts of your self just like you care for the parts of your body. This approach leads to the question of emphasis: some parts of the body are more crucial than others, and one might think that the soul is more important than the body. Similarly, you perhaps ought to care more for your intellect than your emotions. The Platonist tradition indeed taught that you should only care for your rational soul. It seems, however, that the Catholic tradition wanted to emphasize that you should care also for your body, but in the right way. Indeed, the ideal would thus be to care for all your parts.

A classical Aristotelian principle states that for the survival of the whole a part may be sacrificed. In the case of the body, this means, for example, that a hand may be sacrificed in order to save one's life. This principle seems sensible indeed, but it has implications concerning the way in which different parts of the self ought to be cared for. The self is not only an entity consisting of parts, but has also some kind of unity over and above the parts. But what exactly is this unitary whole?

In his *Politics*, Aristotle uses the principle also in a social context. A citizen may be sacrificed to allow the survival of the society because the citizen is only a part of the whole. In the late thirteenth century, a discussion on this topic sprang forth, and turned into a direction that is very interesting from our viewpoint. The discussion concerned the case of a person who without the hope of heavenly reward decides to give his life to save the welfare and existence of the society whose member he is. Now, how is this person motivated? Can he be selfish? We can distinguish between three lines of answering the question.

Godfrey of Fontaines puts forward the idea that the person aims at his own best, like everyone does in everything they do. In this case, the person is acting rationally to avoid the greater bad. If he did not give his life, he would do an evil that could not be brought to balance by anything he could do in the rest of his life. Thus, to achieve the best possible life, he would have to sacrifice it to the welfare of the state. This answer appears to spring from an individualist perspective, where the self is understood in a sense deriving from the three types of self-awareness described above. Fontaines also accepts the classical Aristotelian idea that one always acts for one's own genuine best.

The Franciscans did not accept the principle that people necessarily act for their own best. Rather, they thought that the freedom of the human will means that it is always possible to care more for some other aim than one's own welfare. The standard suggestion was that people are able to choose justice instead of their own best, but many medieval Franciscan thinkers thought that other ultimate aims are possible as well. The answer to the problem we are discussing becomes very simple from this viewpoint: the person is free to choose to care for the society more than he cares for himself. Thus, he is free to sacrifice himself, and in this activity he may be moral rather than selfish.

Both Godfrey of Fontaines and the Franciscans reason on the basis of an individualist conception of the self. The solution of the problem given by Henry of Ghent is different, and from our viewpoint here, it is the most interesting one. According to him, the person giving his individual life for the survival of the society acts for the best of the whole that he considers important. Because his individual person and life are mere parts of the society, he acts for the best of the society. If this requires that he should die for the society, he is motivated to it by the Aristotelian pursuit of happiness. As Henry understands it, the pursuit of happiness concerns happiness of the whole, not just happiness of the individual person.

The Florentine teacher from Dante's time, Remigio dei Girolami develops Henry of Ghent's position further. In Remigio dei Girolami's formulation, the self whose best one seeks in such a case, is the society. In giving one's life for the society, one understands the society as one's own personal self, and act for its best possible happiness. If not in Henry of Ghent's model, in this model at least we have to postulate a fourth kind of self-awareness: awareness of the social whole as one's own self. From this viewpoint, we are not just separate individuals, but societies. Without one's own social context, a person is an incomplete entity like a hand separated from the body.

The medieval discussions contain, thus, at least four very different types of self-awareness. There are at least four very different kinds of things that one may be thinking of when one thinks about oneself. This multiplicity reflects the complexity of human existence. There is no simple or even single thing of which one is aware when one is self-aware. Neither is there a simple or even a single thing that one would have concern for as one's own self.

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Mental Disorders in Late Medieval Philosophy and Theology

1. Introduction

There was a time when it was quite commonly believed that the medieval discussions on mental disorders were dominated by witchcraft and demonology. As a matter of fact, this view survived until the 1980s, especially in general histories of medicine.¹ This is despite the fact that, since the 1930s, there have been a lengthy series of studies concentrating on various aspects of medieval theories of mental disorders, giving much more balanced view of them. With respect to medieval philosophers and theologians, Thomas Aquinas's theory of mental disorders has been investigated in at least two monographs: E.E. Krapf's *Thomas de Aquino y la psicopatologia*,² and Jacques Simonnet's *Du concept de maladie mentale chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*.³ In addition, there have been several articles dealing with it: Paul Kopp's "Psychiatrisches bei Thomas von Aquin. Beiträge zur Psychiatrie der Scholastik II" (1935),⁴ Gottfried Roth's "Thomas von Aquin in der neueren und neuesten Psychiatrie" (1960),⁵ and Jacques Simonnet's "Folie et notations psychopathologiques dans l'oeuvre de Saint Thomas d'Aquin" (1983).⁶ Albert the Great's conception of mental disorders has been studied in Paul Kopp's article "Psychiatrisches bei Albertus Magnus. Beiträge zur Psychiatrie der Scholastik I" (1933),⁷ and Peter of Spain's conception in Heinrich Schipperges's article "Zur Psychologie und Psychiatrie des Petrus Hispanus" (1961).⁸

Medieval philosophical and theological theories of mental disorders have also been discussed in larger monographs giving an overall view of medieval madness theories, for example, Thomas F. Graham's *Medieval Minds. Mental Health in the Middle Ages* (1967),⁹ H.H. Beek's *De geestesgestoorde in de Middeleeuwen: beeld en bemoeienis* (1969),¹⁰

1 Discussion on this, see Kroll (1973); Kroll & Bachrach (1984), (1986); Kemp (1990) 112–114.

2 Krapf (1943). See also Kraus (1971).

3 Simonnet (1971).

4 Kopp (1935).

5 Roth (1960).

6 Simonnet (1983).

7 Kopp (1933).

8 Schipperges (1961).

9 Graham (1967).

10 Beek (1969), 2nd ed., see Beek (1974).

Basil Clarke's *Mental Disorder in Earlier Britain: Exploratory Studies* (1975),¹¹ Judith S. Neaman's *Suggestion of the Devil. The Origins of Madness* (1975),¹² Muriel Laharie's *La folie au Moyen Age XIe–XIIIe siècles* (1991),¹³ and Jean Marie Fritz's *La folie au Moyen Age XIe–XIIIe siècles* (1992).¹⁴ There are also studies of particular theological questions linked with madness, such as investigations into demonic possession¹⁵ and sacred folly.¹⁶ Various theological and philosophical questions have also been dealt with in studies of medieval juridical madness-theories,¹⁷ and in the studies of medieval medical theories of madness.¹⁸

Almost all of the studies dealing with medieval discussions on mental disorders concentrate on the Early or High Middle Ages. This is particularly true in the case of philosophical and theological discussions. A reason for this is that the most of the late medieval philosophers and theologians do not seem to have written systematically on mental disorders. Many of them, however, remarked on them in various contexts.

Despite the lack of scholarly work concerning late medieval madness-conceptions, there have been rather pointed interpretations of them. Sometimes even those who have defended the rational character of the early or high medieval approaches to madness have claimed that, after Thomas Aquinas, the rational attitude changed. Thomas F. Graham wrote in his book *Medieval minds. Mental health in the Middle Ages* (1967) that philosophers after Thomas, such as Scotus and his followers, had “resistance to progress in learning,” and they “failed to grasp the objective spirit of Aristotle and Aquinas”:

John Duns Scotus opposed the views of Aquinas and emphatically linked mental disorders with Satan. The uncompromising Scotus and his hair-splitting Dunsers

11 Clarke (1975).

12 Neaman (1975).

13 Laharie (1991).

14 Fritz (1992).

15 Kemp & Williams (1987); Kemp (1989), (1990) 135–146.

16 Sward (1980), esp. 31–103; Kinsman (1974), esp. 277–278. There are remarks concerning theological folly also in Swain (1932). For Nicholas of Cusa's conception of folly, see Rice (1957); Billington (1984) 23–24.

17 For madness in Canon Law and in the revived Roman Law, see Pickett (1952); Kuttner (1935) 85–110; Neaman (1975) 70–106; Dols (1992) 431–433; Midelfort (1999) 188–191. For madness in English Law, see Neaman (1975) 106–110; Kemp (1990) 125–128.

18 For articles dealing with medieval medical approaches to madness, see Jackson (1972); Kroll (1973); Mora (1978), (1980); Neugebauer (1979); Kroll & Bachrach (1982), (1984), (1986); Jacquart (1983); Pablo (1994). See also Kemp (1990) 114–125. The Peter of Spain -study and the Aquinas-studies mentioned above also belong partly to this group. For overall monographs, see Graham (1967); Beek (1969); Clarke (1975); Neaman (1975); Laharie (1991); Fritz (1992). For other relevant studies, see Schipperges (1990) 111–130.

prompted William Tyndale to remark: “The old barking curs raged in every pulpit.” Their cavilling resistance to progress in learning led to the word *dunce* and moved Samuel Butler to pen these lines in *Hudibras*:

He knew what’s what, and that’s as high
 As metaphysic wit can fly ...
 A second Thomas, or at once
 To name them all, another Dunse.

The breach in philosophy grew ever wider with the likes of William Durandus, a man of little learning and shallow understanding. He was followed by William of Ockham, a sceptic by implication whose concepts were alive with the ghosts of Neo-Platonism. Because these and other philosophers failed to grasp the objective spirit of Aristotle and Aquinas, circular arguments and fruitless discussions prevailed which, in turn, antagonized generations of scientists, so that the schism between philosophy and mental science seemed irreparable, a break that accelerated the decline of medieval wisdom.¹⁹

My aim in this article is to analyse some late medieval philosophical and theological discussions of mental disorders. Among other things, I will examine whether demonology, after all, dominated those discussions. The discussions which I consider philosophical approach mental disorders particularly from the point of view of intellectual knowledge and voluntary actions. The theological discussions approach mental disorders, for instance, by asking in which kinds of states people can receive sacraments, or by investigating demonic effects in human beings, or by considering sacred fools. By “mental disorder” I mean states of mind which were considered as serious and abnormal, more serious than, for instance, problems caused by harmful passions or habits. The most common traditional terms used for mental disorders in the late medieval theological and philosophical texts were “alienation” (*alienatio*), “amentia” (*amentia*), “fury” (*furia*), “insanity” (*insania*), “foolishness” (*fatuitas*), and “frenzy” (*phrenesis*).²⁰ “Amentia” and “insanity” were general terms for madness. The other terms were, in principle, more specific, referring to different kinds of mental disorders, but even they were not often used with great precision. A reason for this is, I think, that the problems in the cognitive capacities were considered rather similar in all kinds of mental disorders; the differences were perhaps seen in such things as bodily behavior which were not of primary interest for philosophers and theologians. The philosophers and the theologians whose texts I will consider are the late medieval Scholastics Peter Olivi,

19 Graham (1967) 73.

20 For madness-typologies in the Middle Ages, see Neaman (1975) 89–91; Fritz (1992) 7, 133–138, 157–160.

John Duns Scotus, and William Ockham. I will first portray in detail what they say about mental disorders in their texts, and then I will try to outline their conception of them.

2. *Peter Olivi*

Peter Olivi (1248–1298) deals with madness in question 59 in his *Commentary on the Second Book of the Sentences*. He discusses there whether children, the sleeping and people in a fury (*furiosus*) can make free decisions (*opera liberi arbitrii*).²¹ His starting point is that there is a consensus that the intellectual part of the people in question can have some acts sometimes, but they can never have free acts, that is, acts over which they would have full power (*plenum dominium*). There is also, according to him, consensus that those people have a total or partial impediment with respect to their acts. This impediment, according to Olivi, can be known by experience.²² Instead, there is, according to him, no consensus of what this impediment is and what has caused it.²³

According to Olivi, children, the sleeping and people in a fury cannot have free acts because a real change (*immutatio*) or passion (*passio*) in them impedes the use of the *liberum arbitrium*. The question is, what is this change or passion, and what causes it.²⁴ Olivi thinks that the change which impedes the use of the *liberum arbitrium* is not on the level of habits since the same habits can exist when a person is asleep or awake. It is neither on the level of acts nor of the “particular aspects” (*aspectus particularis*) of the

21 For calling my attention to this text and help with its analysis, I am grateful to Mikko Yrjönsuuri's article “Free Will and Self-Control in Peter Olivi.” Yrjönsuuri (2002).

22 Peter John Olivi, II *Sent.*, q. 59, 530: “In quaestione ista aliquid est in quo omnes communiter consentiunt, scilicet, in hoc quod in praedictis statibus pars intellectiva aliquos actus possit habere aliquando et non semper, nunquam autem actus liberos, qui scilicet exeant ab ea cum pleno dominio; et ita omnes volunt quod in istis statibus semper sit impedita quantum ad suos actus vel in toto vel in parte. Et hoc idem docet experientia propria qua nihil est certius; experimur enim omnes haec impedimenta in nobis et in aliis, et experimur etiam aliquos actus rationis et voluntatis in praedictis statibus tam in nobis quam in aliis, sicut dictae auctoritates et rationes superius ad istud factae evidenter hoc probant. Hoc est igitur in quo omnes consentiunt.”

23 *Ibid.*, 530–531: “Circa hoc autem aliquid est in quo doctores varie sentiunt et hactenus senserunt, videlicet, in assignando modum et causam huius impedimenti, quare scilicet nunquam possit in istis statibus libere operari et aliquando nullo modo, et quomodo hoc impedimentum contingere possit parti intellectivae absque aliquo inconvenienti et absque repugnantia suae intellectualitatis et libertatis.”

24 *Ibid.*, 544–545: “Supposito igitur quod aliquam immutationem seu passionem realem in ipso ponat et importet, tunc videri oportet immutationis huius specificam quidditatem, et eius causalitatem, quomodo scilicet causetur a corpore ratione unionis praedictae ...”

liberum arbitrium, since the use of the *liberum arbitrium* is not impeded although acts and “particular aspects” change. The change is with respect to the “universal aspect” (*aspectus universalis*) of the *liberum arbitrium*, and its origin is somewhere other than in the *liberum arbitrium* itself.²⁵ By “particular aspects” of the *liberum arbitrium*, Olivi probably means the *liberum arbitrium* as far as it has dealings with various particular things, just as particular senses in the sensory cognitive potency deal with various particular things. By “universal aspect” of the *liberum arbitrium*, Olivi seems to mean the common part of the *liberum arbitrium*, just as the common sense or imagination is the common part of the sensory cognitive potency.²⁶ So, the impediment concerns the common capacity of willing. The change in question, according to Olivi, is caused by a change of the body through an intermediary change of the sensory part.²⁷ This is, according to Olivi, made evident by sure and constant experience. It is evident also when considering the union of the parts of the human being: a change in one part of the human being also has to cause a change in other ones since the parts are consubstantially together.²⁸

But Olivi has more to say about the subject. He specifies his view by answering the following four questions: 1. How does the impediment effect children, the sleeping and madmen? 2. Why is it so that, sometimes in those people, the intellectual part has some acts, but sometimes not? 3. Why is it so there can never be free acts in them? 4. Why is it so that in those people there cannot be apprehension without an error?²⁹ The answers vary among the three groups of people. I will consider Olivi’s answers concerning the case of the mentally disordered.

1. In mental disorders, the problem is, according to Olivi, an immoderate direction of imagination. In madmen, the imagination or cogitation functions, but it is immod-

25 *Ibid.*, 545–546: “Immutatio igitur haec quae dicitur ligatio liberi arbitrii seu impedimentum usus eius non est circa habitus, quia idem habitus manere possunt in somno et in vigilia, nec circa actus vel particulares aspectus, quia actus et particulares aspectus mutantur et mutari possunt continue ipso libero arbitrio existente non ligato nec impedito. Est igitur haec immutatio aspectus universalis. Cum etiam haec immutatio causari non possit a libero arbitrio nisi valde per accidens, sed solum per viam naturalem seu per causam modo naturali et necessario operantem, nec sit eius admissio vel eiectio in eius potestate ac per hoc non possit esse in ipso, in quantum est liberum: apparet quod hoc impedimentum seu ligamentum est immutatio aspectus universalis liberi arbitrii, existens in ipso, ut non est liberum, potestati eius in nullo subiecta, ab alio causata.”

26 *Ibid.*, 550: “... loquor de sensitiva universali quam sensum commune dicimus et phantasiam vel imaginativam, et loquor etiam de conversione aspectus universalis.” (See footnote 31.)

27 *Ibid.*, 546: “Est enim a corporis immutatione per intermediam immutationem partis sensitivae causata.”

28 *Ibid.*, 546–547.

29 *Ibid.*, 549.

erately inclined or directed to the species of its object.³⁰ The wrong direction in the superior powers, that is, in the intellect, follows from this.³¹ Olivi goes on to say that there can be two causes for such a direction in the imagination. It can be caused either by a natural bodily cause, or by a separate spirit. In both cases, the change is spiritual, not local or substantial.³² If the cause is bodily and natural, and it can only be removed with difficulty, the person is said to have amentia (*amentia*). If it can be removed easily, he or she is said to have frenzy (*phrenesis*).³³ If the cause is a separate spirit, it is a question of alienation (*alienatio*) or rapture (*raptus*).³⁴ Olivi remarks that sometimes the organic or humoral bodily states can effect the mind very suddenly, as happens, for instance, in the case of the conjugal act, according to Augustine and Cicero.³⁵

2. As seen above, the problem of the mentally disordered is that their imagination and *a fortiori* their intellect are immoderately directed to their objects. The wrong direction of acts does not mean absence of them, on the contrary: Olivi clearly says that furious

- 30 While sleeping, the animal or sensory functions are hindered: the sleeping, for instance, do not see although their eyes are open. *Ibid.*, 549–550: “Aspectus enim duobus modis indebitum statum seu improportionalem respectu actu suorum potest sortiri, scilicet, aut per immoderatam ipsius retractionem aut per immoderatam conversionem et inclinationem. Retractionem voco, sicut cum dicimus quod virtutes animales seu sensitivae in somno ad inferiora retrahuntur, in tantum quod, etiamsi oculi essent aperti et obiectum alias debito modo praesens, non fieret visio. Conversionem vero immoderatam voco, sicut in phreneticis dicimus quod imaginativa seu cogitativa est immoderate inclinata seu conversa ad species sibi obiectas.”
- 31 *Ibid.*, 550: “Retractio autem et conversio superiorum potentiarum indebita sequitur necessario ad indebitam conversionem et retractionem partis sensitivae, pro eo quod ex hoc tollitur ordo praedictus superius. Non enim moveri potest sensitiva nec regi debite a superiori, quando eius universalis aspectus est indebite retractus vel ad exteriora indebite conversus et inclinatus; et loquor de sensitiva universali quam sensum communem dicimus et phantasiam vel imaginativam, et loquor etiam de conversione aspectus universalis.”
- 32 *Ibid.*, 551: “Conversio autem improportionalis potest etiam in ea contingere duabus ex causis, scilicet, a causa corporali naturaliter immutante vel a spiritu separato voluntarie operante. Ab utraque autem semper fit per immoderatam motionem spirituum et impulsionem secundum viam et modum quo per impulsum spiritum potentiae feruntur et convertuntur ad sua obiecta; non enim per hoc intendo quod moveantur localiter et substantialiter usque ad illa.”
- 33 *Ibid.*, 551: “Quando igitur indebitae conversionis causa est corporalis seu naturalis, si est difficile solubilis, est amentia diu manens, si autem facile, dicitur phrenesis.”
- 34 *Ibid.*, 551: “A spiritu vero est, ut in arreptitiis seu daemonicis seu qualitercunque a spiritu, seu bono seu malo, alienatis et raptis.”
- 35 *Ibid.*, 551: “Contingit autem aliquando aliquid simile subito et ad momentum, sicut in consummatione actus coniugalis dicit Augustinus fieri, libro *Contra Iulianum*, et Tullius idem, et sicut in cardiaca passione propter defectum cordis seu turbationem fumositatum ascendentium ad cerebrum.”

and possessed (*arrepticus*) people's fantasies always have acts. Only if there is also a retraction of acts in madmen's minds, if they, for instance, sleep, or if they are children, they may not have some cognitive acts at all.³⁶

3. Madmen cannot have free acts since the conditions for such acts are not fulfilled in their case. An act of the will is free only if there is *liberum arbitrium* towards its object, and towards the will itself as an agent, and if there is—or at least could be—*liberum arbitrium* also towards the will itself and the act as an object, that is, the will as willing. At least the last two conditions, containing self-reflection, are not fulfilled in the case of madmen.³⁷ Therefore, their acts cannot be free.

36 *Ibid.*, 551–552: “Quando enim hoc impedimentum provenit ex indebita conversione aspectus, semper est aliquis actus; unde furiosi et arrepticii semper sunt in aliquo actu phantasiae cogitativae, nisi alias somno ligentur vel alio ligamento quod fiat per retractionem. Possunt enim aliquando duo ligamenta in simul concurrere, non quod conversio et retractio simul possint existere, sed quia unum erit in actu et aliud in necessitate suae causae, sicut puer qui naturalem habet necessitatem ad furiam eo ipso habet naturalem necessitatem ad conversiones aspectus indebitas. Et sic habet furiosus dormiens. Causa autem quare tales semper sint in actu, quando non intervenit alterius generis ligamentum, patet: quia ad conversionem aspectus, si obiecta sint alias debito modo praesentia—sicut semper intellectui et phantasiae sunt praesentia illa quae sunt in memoria, sive aspectus sit universalis sive particularis—, semper sequitur aliquis actus apprehensionis.”

37 *Ibid.*, 552–553: “Ad actus enim liberos necessario exigitur triplex aspectus, qui esse non possunt, nisi liberum arbitrium maneat in sublimi et potestativa et elevata consistentia super se et super suum obiectum et super inferiores potentias. Exigitur enim unus aspectus quo sit conversum ad obiectum. Et alius aspectus quo sit conversum ad se ut agens ad patiens, quia non potest se movere, nisi prius sit conversum ad se ut movens ad mobile; actus autem non est in eo liber, nisi exeat ab eo movendo se libere, sicut infra in aliis quaestionibus patebit, tunc autem apparet quod movet se libere, quando potest se ab illo motu retinere. Tertius aspectus exigitur, saltem in promptitudine ut statim ad minus haberi possit, quo videlicet sit conversum ad se ut ad obiectum vel saltem quod possit converti super se et super suum actum sicut super obiectum, pro eo quod nunquam aliquid volumus libere, nisi cum volumus nos velle, aut saltem cum statim possumus nos velle actum illum. Uterque autem istorum aspectuum dicitur reflexio sui ipsius super se, potissime tamen ultimus; sicut et primus potissime dicitur consistentia ipsius liberi arbitrii in se seu super se. Istos autem duos aspectus habere non potest, nisi prius adsit ille quo directe aspicit obiectum. Ille autem potest esse sine istis, sicut in aliis potentiis apparet, quamquam in suo complemento esse non possit, nisi alii adsint. Quia igitur aspectus ille potest esse aliis cessantibus, ideo aliquis actus potest esse, libero arbitrio adhuc impedito quantum ad actus liberos. Quia autem, quando habet duos ultimos, tunc non est in aliquo impeditum nec ligatum, quia non est aliud habere illos quam esse in suo pleno dominio: ideo impedimento stante vel ligatione non potest exire in actus liberos, quia si posset, tunc simul esset ligatum et non ligatum, immutatum praedicta immutatione et non immutatum.” Further, see Yrjönsuuri (2002) 120.

4. The reason for the errors in the apprehensions of madmen (as well as of children and of the sleeping), according to Olivi, is that in their cases, a sufficient collation of things in the mind is impeded in two ways. For one thing, their wills cannot freely direct and move the intellects, which is always required for free collation. For another, their reasons act deficiently. They cannot, with certitude and directly, apprehend the states of themselves or the states of the other powers of the human being; only indirectly and without certitude they sometimes estimate or dream the truth of them. This is because the self-reflective capacities of madmen are crippled and dull (*valde prostratus et obtusus*). Consequently, the reasons of madmen cannot have true knowledge of the acts of the powers of the human being either. Therefore, for instance, they may believe the acts of the imagination to be acts of the particular senses, and the species of the objects to be externally existing things.³⁸

I will now try to outline Peter Olivi's conception of madness. According to him, there are no free acts in a madman's will since there is an impediment to such acts. This impediment is not on the level of habits or acts of the *liberum arbitrium*, and it is

38 *Ibid.*, 553–554: “Ratio enim omnium errorum qui in statibus praedictis eveniunt est impedimentum sufficientis collationis. Quod tunc ex duobus contingit. Quorum unum est, quia voluntas non potest libere convertere et movere intellectum hinc inde, quod semper exigitur in libera collatione. Aliud est, quia ratio non potest apprehendere omnia quae exiguntur ad sufficientem collationem faciendam sine qua non potest plenarie veritatem iudicare de apprehensis. Non enim potest statum suum nec aliarum potentiarum certitudinaliter et directe apprehendere, licet indirecte et sine certitudine aliquando aestimet seu somniet veritatem de statu earum, sicut cum homo somniat se dormire et somniare. Ratio autem quare non potest tunc temporis ratio certitudinaliter et directe de statu suo et potentiarum suarum veritatem apprehendere est, quia valde prostratus et obtusus est aspectus quo poterat libere et plenarie reflectere se super se et super alias potentias. Ex hoc autem quod circa apprehensionem status potentiarum deficit necesse est quod deficiat circa veracem apprehensionem actuum et obiectorum. Non enim potest scire de actibus quos tunc habet, saltem omnino vere, a qua potentia exeunt, pro eo quod non potest se plenarie reflectere super eas. Unde actus imaginativae credit esse actus sensuum particularium et species obiectas credit esse res particulares et sensibiles exterius existentes; pro eo enim quod rem exterius actu non apprehendit nec statum sensuum particularium, quem apprehendendo manifeste experiretur quod res non est obiecta sensibus suis, et quod actus quos tunc habet non sunt actus suorum sensuum, ipsamque speciem sibi obiectam ipsumque actum aspicit modo valde materiali adhaerenti, qualis est modus sensuum particularium in sentiendo res exteriores, et qualis est modus sensus communis in sentiendo actus sensuum particularium. Istis tribus de causis deficit in iudicio actus et speciei sibi obiectae, videlicet, quia non potest eos referre sufficienter ad potentias quarum sunt et sic nec ad locum ubi existunt, quia statum potentiae non recte apprehendit, nec potest ea referre ad sensum particularem nec ad eius actum et obiectum, et quia speciem aspicit aspectu consimili aspectui sensus particularis, actum vero aspectu consimili aspectui sensus communis.”

not limited only to concern the willing of some particular objects, but it concerns the common capacity of willing. The problems in a madman's will pertain to the problems in his intellect. There are serious errors in it since it is not capable of a sufficient collation of things. There are two reasons for this. One is that the will of a madman cannot freely direct and move the intellect. Another is that the self-reflective capacity of the reason is crippled. Therefore, a madman may, for instance, believe the acts of the imagination to be acts of the particular senses, and the species of the objects to be externally existing things.

The problems in the intellectual part of a madman originate from a disordered imagination. Olivi thinks that, in madmen, the imagination is immoderately directed to its objects. There can be two causes for such a direction in the imagination. It can be caused either by a natural bodily cause, or by a separate spirit. If the cause is bodily and natural, and it can only be removed with difficulty, the person is said to have amentia; if it is easily removable, he or she is said to have frenzy. If the cause is a separate spirit, it is a question of alienation or rapture.³⁹

3. John Duns Scotus

Thomas F. Graham claimed that John Duns Scotus (c. 1265–1308) “emphatically linked mental disorders with Satan.”⁴⁰ Unfortunately, Graham did not refer to any particular text of John Duns Scotus, but there are indeed texts in which Scotus makes the link concerned. In his *Commentary on the Second Book of the Sentences* (*Lect.* II, d. II, q. un.; *Ord.* II, d. II, q. un.; *Rep.* II, d. II, q. I), Scotus discusses whether an angel (good or evil) can cause something in a human being's intellect. His view is that an angel cannot enrapture (*rapere*) the intellect to have an intellectual vision of something purely intelligible, but it can enrapture the imagination to imagine something imaginable. This imagining can become so intense that it leads to insanity. This too intensive imagining, according to Scotus, is rather a question of fury than rapture. While having an intense imagination experience of something, a person may seem to have an intellectual vision of it, but that is not the case. An intense imagination experience of something, however, is naturally accompanied (*concomitatur*) by an intellectual cognition of the imagined thing. In this way, through phantasms, the devil can affect the intellect.⁴¹

39 In addition to proper madness, Olivi speaks about holy and spiritual amentia or insanity, which is not real madness at all but Christian life which the world does not understand. See Peter John Olivi, *Lect. apost.* 26, 419–420.

40 Graham (1967) 73.

41 John Duns Scotus, *Lect.* II, d. II, q. un., n. 17, ed. Vaticana 19, 64, 15–18: “Unde angelus non potest rapere intellectum ad aliqua spiritualia intelligibilia,—nec diabolus, sed tantum ad aliqua imaginabilia (et ‘sic rapere et constituere in extasi’ magis est periculosum quam bonum, et facit hominem insanum) ...” *Ord.* II, d. II, q. un., n. 14, ed. Vaticana 8, 215, 93–102: “... ”

In Scotus's *Commentary on the Second Book of the Sentences* (*Lect.* II, d. 14, q. 3; *Rep.* II, d. 14, q. 3), there are also discussions on the role of the stars in madness. Scotus says that the stars affect the organs of lunatics (*lunaticus*), which disturbs the functions of the intellect.⁴²

In his *Commentary on the First Book of the Sentences* (*Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4), Scotus discusses whether a phantasm can be an object of an act of the intellect, and in this connection he refers to frenzy. If a phantasm can be an object of an act of the intellect, is it not so that the intellect, because of an error in the fantasy, can make a mistake, or at least can be bound so that it cannot operate, which seems to happen in the case of the sleeping and frenetics? One can say, according to Scotus, that, if the intellect were bound when there is such an error in the fantasy, it would not make a mistake, since there would be no act in the intellect in that case.⁴³ It is clear that the intellects of those asleep do not make mistakes, since there are no acts in the intellect when a person sleeps. If Scotus thinks that there are some acts in the intellects of madmen, the question of whether their intellects can err remains unanswered.

In his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, Scotus deals with madness only slightly. In q. 8, he discusses whether the intellect can act without phantasms, and in this

angelus non potest aliquem intellectum rapere ad intellectualem visionem, et quod omnis raptus—virtute diaboli factus—est praecise ad aliquid intense imaginandum: et ideo raptus eorum sunt magis furiae quam raptus, quia intensa imaginatio facit animum ita distractum ab omni alia cogitatione cuiuslibet actualis intellectionis quod videtur ipsum intellectualiter videre; et concomitatur forte illam intensam imaginationem alicuius rei intellectio illius imaginabilis, sed nulla est ibi intellectio alicuius mere intelligibilis non imaginabilis.” *Rep.* II, d. 11, q. 1, n. 6, ed. Wadding II.1, 309–310: “... nullus angelus potest causare raptum immediate in viatore. Vnde bonus angelus non potest causare verum raptum, nec causat fictum; malus tamen aliquando videtur causare raptum, & tamen non potest facere nisi ad excessivam imaginationem, & tunc communiter potest facere ad intellectionem naturalem, quae nata est concomitari talem imaginationem. Ideo magis debet dici furiae, quam raptus, quae tantum fiunt ab Angelis.”

42 *Lect.* II, d. 14, q. 3, n. 36, ed. Vaticana 19, 126, 18–22: “Unde licet corpora caelestia possint agere in corpus humanum et in organum et in phantasiam, et sic impedire actionem intellectus et facere hominem phreneticum,—sed quod habeant actionem immediate circa intellectum et voluntatem, est omnino falsum.” *Rep.* II, d. 14, q. 3, n. 5, ed. Wadding II.1, 342: “Possunt [stellae] etiam agere in organa, intendendo qualitatem ad gradum debitum, vel remittendo. Et ideo dicitur quod intellectus corrumpitur corrupto quodam interiori in nobis, & sic Lunatici aliquando peius disponuntur, aliquando melius.” Even the stars of melancholy (*stellae melancholiae*) are mentioned, *ibid.*

43 *Ord.* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4, n. 252, ed. Vaticana 3, 153, 14–19: “Si obicis ‘si phantasma potest repraesentare se ut obiectum, igitur intellectus per illum errorem virtutis phantasticae potest errare, vel saltem potest ligari ne possit operari, ut patet in somniis et in freneticis’,—potest dici quod etsi ligetur quando est talis error in virtute phantastica, non tamen errat intellectus, quia tunc non habet aliquem actum.”

connection, he says that the intellect is experienced at being impeded from operations when there are problems in the organ of fantasy, like in the case of frenzy.⁴⁴

Scotus has a theological mental disorder text in his *Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences* (*Ord.* IV, d. 4, q. 4; *Rep.* IV, d. 4, q. 4) where he ponders whether adults can receive baptism without consent. The madness terms he uses in this connection are fury (*furia*) and amentia (*amentia*). He also mentions foolishness (*fatuitas, stultitia*). Mad people are not, in this connection, necessarily thought to be so permanently; Scotus takes into account mad persons who have lucid intervals (*lucidum intervallum*). Scotus thinks that those who are mad do not have the use of reason (*usus rationis*). The will of such a person can actually neither consent nor dissent to the sacrament. If mad people have never had the use of reason, and there is no hope of that, they can be baptized just like children, since in that case baptism would not be against their wills. If there is hope that those born mad could be cured, baptism should be delayed.⁴⁵ If madmen have had the use of reason, and there is hope of lucid intervals, one has to wait for such a moment.⁴⁶ If madmen have had the use of reason, but there is no hope of

44 *Quaest. an.*, q. 18, n. 1, ed. Wadding 2, 553: "... experimur intellectum impediri in sua operatione laeso organo phantasiae, vt in phreneticis." In a text which is, in the Wadding edition, misidentified as *Reportatio* I (but which actually is Book 1 of the *Additiones magnae* compiled by William of Alnwick, see Williams 2003, 10–11), it is said that the case of frenetics shows that an indisposition of the fantasy organ impedes functions of the intellect. *Rep.* I, d. 3, q. 5, n. 9, ed. Wadding 11.1, 50: "... sufficienter experimur nos conuerti ad phantasmata, ad hoc quod intelligamus: aliter enim posset quis intelligere organo phantasiae indisposito, & sic nulla indispositio organi impediret intellectum ab intelligendo, eius oppositum videtur in phreneticis."

45 *Ord.* IV, d. 4, q. 4, n. 2, ed. Wadding 8, 236: "De primo [adultus non vitur nunc ratione, nec est vsus vnquam, vt furiosus, vel fatuus a natiuitate] breuiter dicendum est, sicut de paruulo, nisi quod in hoc est differentia, quod si speratur ipsum aliquando curandum, & vsurum ratione, expectandum est tempus illud, vt cum maiori reuerentia suscipiat Sacramentum. Si autem desperatur de eo quod ad vsum rationis nunquam attingat, statim conferendum est sibi Sacramentum: quia nulli Deus excludit remedium ad salutem." *Rep.* IV, d. 4, q. 4, n. 1, 2, ed. Wadding 11.2, 592: "... Adultus, qui nunquam est usus ratione, baptizandus est sicut paruuli. ... Si non vitur ratione, nec vnquam vtatur ea, tunc iudicandum est de tali, sicut de paruulo, quod scilicet recipit Sacramentum, & rem Sacramenti; si enim furiosus, vel stultus a principio natiuitatis suae cogitur ad Baptismum, recipit Baptismum, quia in eo non inuenitur obex contrariae voluntatis."

46 *Ord.* IV, d. 4, q. 4, n. 2, ed. Wadding 8, 236: "... expeditne talem [nunc non vte, qui aliquando tamen vsus est ratione] baptizari? Multa enim licent, quae non expediunt, 1. *Corinth.* 6. Respondeo, si speretur eum rediturum ad vsum rationis, magis expedit tempus expectare, quo vteretur ratione, puta de dormiente, tempus vigiliae expedit expectare: & de furioso tempus lucidi intervalli." *Rep.* IV, d. 4, q. 4, n. 1, ed. Wadding 11.2, 592: "... si aliquando vsum rationis habuit, & nunc non habet, speratur tamen quod habebit, expectandum est lucidum intervallum."

lucid intervals, they cannot be baptized if they have dissented to baptism when having the use of reason. That is because even madmen's minds have habits. Those madmen who have dissented to baptism when having the use of reason are considered to dissent to baptism habitually, i.e., to have a habit of dissent after the acts of dissent. If they had the use of reason, they would be thought to dissent actually.⁴⁷

On the basis of these texts, it seems clear that Scotus thinks that madness can be caused by a demon, but more often he gives natural reasons for it. His view is that a disorder in the organ of fantasy hinders madmen's intellects from having the use of reason, and therefore they cannot consent or dissent to things by their wills.

4. *William Ockham*

In his *Commentary on the First Book of the Sentences (Ordinatio I)*, d. 3, q. 6, William Ockham (c. 1285–1347) says, following Scotus, that, a fool and a person in a fury belong to those who do not have the use of reason (*usus rationis*). Sometimes he even says that they do not have intellectual knowledge (*notitia intellectiva*).⁴⁸ In the *Various Questions*, q. 8, Ockham says he “firmly believes” that a fool and a furious person cannot have some acts of the intellect, especially judging ones. There cannot be in them acts with respect to complex objects, since in order to have such acts, there has to be a concurrent act of the will.⁴⁹

In a fool and a mad person's will, there still are, according to Ockham, acts, but not free ones. Their volitions may even be directed to good things because of virtuous habits generated when they were healthy. Such acts are not, however, virtuous, because

47 *Rep. IV*, d. 4, q. 4, n. 1, 3, ed. Wadding II.2, 592: “... si ante priuationem vsus rationis dissensit, nihil accipit si in amentia baptizetur, secus si ante voluit. ... ille, qui sic dissentit habitualiter, & non vtitur ratione, prius tamen quando habuit usum rationis, dissentit actualiter, & tunc nisi interueniret motus voluntatis contrarius, iudicari debet simpliciter dissentiens, ac si actualiter dissentiret: quia ex quo quando habuit vsum rationis, & dissensit actualiter, & post non interuenit aliquis motus contrarius voluntatis, signum est quod si tunc etiam vteretur ratione, quod etiam tunc dissentiret. Et de tali dico quod si immergatur in aqua, quod nec recipit Sacramentum, nec rem Sacramenti; sicut nec vtens ratione, si dissentiret actualiter, nihil reciperet: & de tali credo, si sic dissentiens habitualiter baptizaretur, quod alias esset baptizandus cum rediret ad vsum rationis propter rationem iam dictam.”

48 William Ockham, *Ord. I*, d. 3, q. 6, OTh II, 497, 11–14: “... idem experimentum est de furiosis et fatuis et aliis carentibus usu rationis, quia eodem modo procedunt in tali cognitione sicut pueri, et tamen non cognoscunt universale, quia non habent notitiam intellectivam.”

49 *Quaest. variae*, q. 8, OTh VIII, 427, 409–413: “... credo firmiter quod in talibus [fatuis et furiosis] non potest elici aliquis actus intellectus,—maxime iudicativus—, licet forte in eis posset esse actus apprehensivus respectu incomplexorum, non respectu complexorum, quia ad illum concurrat actus voluntatis, sicut alibi patet ...”

these people do not know what they do.⁵⁰ Because of the lack of the use of reason, the wills of mentally disordered people are incapable of performing their due functions, such as controlling the sensory passions. Therefore, they may have desires, sorrows and joys which they cannot control.⁵¹

Where do the problems in the intellectual souls of the fool or mad people come from? In his *Commentary on the Second Book of the Sentences* (*Reportatio* II), q. 13, Ockham says that a person's intellect can act only if there is a due complexion and disposition in his or her body and fantasy. Without such, one's intellect cannot act, as is obvious in the case of children and persons in a fury.⁵²

Let us first see what Ockham says about problems in mentally disordered people's sensory souls. In the *Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences* (*Reportatio* IV), q. 14, Ockham says that persons in a fury may, for instance, say that they see or hear what they do not. This kind of confusion is possible with the help of the sensory memory.⁵³ True apprehensions of various objects have caused habits in these people

50 *Quaest. variae*, q. 7, a. 3, OTh VIII, 362–363, 500–509: "... nullus virtuose agit nisi scienter agat et ex libertate. Et ideo si aliquando talis actus voluntatis elicitur a tali habitu sine actu prudentiae, non dicitur virtuosus nec est, sed magis elicitur sicut actus appetitus sensitivi habituati, sicut in fatuis patet quod aliquid volunt, quod prius virtuose voluerunt, propter habitum derelictum in voluntate, qui inclinabat ad actus virtuosos quando fuit in bono statu, sed nunc non est actus virtuosus, quia nec est laudabilis nec vituperabilis propter actus suos. Et tota ratio est, quia nescit quid facit, eo quod non habet prudentiam sive rectam rationem." For the lack of virtuousness or viciousness (sinfulness) in the acts of fool and a mad person, see also *Rep.* III, q. 12, OTh VI, 428, 13–15; *Rep.* IV, q. 11, OTh VII, 195, 19–20; *Quaest. variae*, q. 8, OTh VIII, 424–425, 343–354.

51 *Quodl.* II, q. 17, OTh IX, 188, 52–53, 56–57: "... Philosophus intelligit de passionibus sensitivis quae non sunt in potestate nostra ... sicut est etiam dolere, gaudere, quae conveniunt pueris et fatuis, qui non habent usum rationis." *Rep.* III, q. 11, OTh VI, 357, 4–9: "Sicut furiosus habens habitum adquisitum prius quando habuit usum rationis circa aliquod obiectum delectabile, et hoc in parte sensitiva, nisi sit aliqua tristitia fortior vincens, oportet eum, existentem in furia et non habentem usum rationis, necessario ferri in illud in quod prius non oportuit eum ferri propter imperium voluntatis."

52 *Rep.* II, q. 13, OTh V, 294, 11–15: "Tamen ad hoc quod aliquis sit in potentia accidentali ad intelligendum requiritur debita complexio et dispositio corporis et omnium virtutum, et per consequens phantasiae. Et si non habeat talem dispositionem, non potest intelligere, ut patet in pueris et furiosis." In the *Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences* (*Reportatio* IV), q. 14, Ockham says that for scientific knowledge one needs a determined complexion and quality in the body, as it is obvious from the case of the sleeping and a fool and the mad. *Rep.* IV, q. 14, OTh VII, 281, 17–20: "Quia ad hoc quod aliquis scientifice cognoscat aliquid requiritur determinata complexio et qualitas in corpore, et ipsa deficiente non potest homo intelligere, sicut patet in dormientibus, fatuis et furiosis."

53 *Rep.* IV, q. 14, OTh VII, 304, 14–16: "... furiosis qui dicunt se videre, audire, et audisse quod modo non audiunt, et tamen non habent usum rationis, igitur habent memoriam sensitivam."

which, in their turn, generate in them corresponding cognitive acts.⁵⁴ The confusions in fantasy originate in the body: in the *Quodlibetal Questions* III, q. 20, it appears that frenetics and persons in a fury are wrong because the acts in their imaginations are ordained in a different way as in those in a state of good health (*sanitas*) because of the bodily disposition.⁵⁵

As seen above, Ockham uses the term “good health” (*sanitas*) when referring to the state of those who are mentally in order. In Ockham, such connotative terms as “good health” and “illness” (*aegritudo*) refer to certain commensurations of qualities or humors.⁵⁶ What are the bodily qualities which have to be in order in the case of mental health? Ockham does not seem to be interested in identifying them, but probably lets

54 *Rep.* IV, q. 14, OTh VII, 314, 7–12: “Ad illud de furiosis dicendum eodem modo. Unde licet proferant tales propositiones, tamen non habent aliquem actum complexum in parte sensitiva terminatum ad talia complexa, sed tantum actus incomplexos causatos ex habitibus incomplexis eorum quae prius audierunt vel viderunt. Unde talis propositio non habet aliquid esse nisi tantum in voce.” In the *Various Questions*, q. 7, a. 2, Ockham says that brute animals, and the mad (*furiosus, infatuatus*) can, because of habits, elicit acts when the sensible objects are not present, and this happens by fantasy and “other sensory virtues.” *Quaest. variae*, q. 7, a. 2, OTh VIII, 339–340, 231–247: “Septima distinctio est quod habituum inclinantium ad actus quidam sunt subiective in parte sensitiva et quidam in voluntate. Primum membrum patet per experientiam de brutis, furiosis et infatuatis, qui aliquos actus possunt elicere in absentia rerum sensibilium; non per intellectum et voluntatem, quia in eis non est usus rationis; igitur per phantasiam et alias virtutes sensitivas. Hoc non potest esse sine habitu genito ex actu qui habetur in praesentia illarum rerum, quia impossibile est quod aliquid transeat de contradictorio in contradictorium etc.; sed phantasia in talibus et appetitus sensitivus post primum actum possunt aliquem actum elicere quem non possunt ante primum actum; igitur ex illo actu aliquid generatur in tali potentia; non species, quia illa non est ponenda, sicut alibi patet; si etiam ponatur, illa praecedit actum; et si illa sola ponatur, numquam potest in actum in absentia rerum si non habeatur actus in eadem potentia in praesentia obiecti; igitur ex illo actu causatur aliquis habitus in tali potentia; igitur etc.”

55 *Quodl.* III, q. 20, OTh IX, 282–283, 31–45: “Si dicis quod phantasia aliquando exit in actus imaginandi et loquendi sine omni actu consimili praevio, sicut patet in phreneticis et furiosis, qui multos habent actus imaginandi et multa loquuntur quae numquam prius in sanitate imaginabantur. Similiter dormientes somniant multa quae prius non imaginabantur: Respondeo quod in talibus est multitudo actuum diversimode ordinatorum, quia isti actus aliter ordinantur in sanitate et in infirmitate, et aliter in vigilante et in dormiente. Sed quilibet illorum actuum praesupponit aliquem actum sibi similem in sanitate et in vigilante. Et isto modo videtur dormiens formare propositiones et syllogizare, quia vigilans audivit propositiones et syllogismos et partes eorum, et imaginatur, sicut puer illa quae audivit, et propter diversam dispositionem corporalem alio ordine imaginatur tales actus sive voces.”

56 See *Exp. Phys.* VII, c. 4, OPh V, 651–652, 3–25; *Exp. Praed. Arist.*, c. 14, OPh II, 287–288, 44–52; *Rep.* III, q. 7, OTh VI, 204, 10–14.

the physicians do it, since they should have, as he says, a lot of experience of the changes of corporeal humors.⁵⁷

In order to be considered a mental disorder, does a state of mind have to be permanent? In the *Exposition of Aristotle's Categories*, c. 14, Ockham says that, according to Aristotle, one is said to be mindless (*demens*) when the causes of the state are permanent and only with difficulty changeable.⁵⁸ In the cases of other madness terms, Ockham does not mention the duration of the state concerned.

Ockham's view of mental disorders has implications on his ethics, as mentioned before. Does it also have implications for his theology? One could assume so, but Ockham himself does not seem to be interested in developing such implications, at least in his theological and philosophical works. In them, he seems to have only one theological remark concerning mental disorders. In the *Commentary on the Fourth Book of the Sentences (Reportatio IV)*, q. 2, he says, following Scotus, that adults in a fury can be baptized without their actual consent, if they have consented before becoming furious, and have not afterwards dissented to baptism.⁵⁹

To summarize, Ockham thinks that the functions of the intellect and the will are not in order in fools and mad people because of wrongly ordained imaginations, which, in their turn, originate at the bodily level.

57 *Quodl.* II, q. 16, OTh IX, 184–185, 73–87: "... secundum Philosophum, quandoque passiones sunt superabundantes, quandoque deficientes. Quando autem sunt passiones superabundantes, tunc ad eliciendum actus virtuosos oportet aliquam qualitatem destruere in homine quae ad tales passiones inclinat; et illa qualitas forte frequenter est calor. Exemplum: intemperatus et incontinens, in quo passiones concupiscentiae abundant, per macerationem carnis et subtractionem victualium remittit illam qualitatem inclinativam ad passiones concupiscentiae. Et possibile est forte quod eo ipso quod tale principium inclinativum remittitur vel destruitur, generetur simul cum hoc alia qualitas corporalis inclinans ad actus temperatos. Utrum autem ita sit vel non, et qualis debeat esse illa qualitas, pertinet principaliter ad medicos determinare, qui plures experientias de mutatione corporum humorum debent habere."

58 *Exp. Praed. Arist.*, c. 14, OPh II, 282, 3–7 (§9): "Hic ostendit [Philosophus] differentiam inter passibiles qualitates et passiones ex parte animae, dicens quod illae qualitates quae fiunt ex passionibus non cito transeuntibus vel ex quibuscumque aliis causis, si sint permanentes et de difficili mobiles, dicuntur passibiles qualitates, quia secundum eas dicimur quales, sicut dicimur dementes vel iracundi."

59 *Rep.* IV, q. 2, OTh VII, 35, 10–14: "Tamen in adulto non requiritur consensus actualis de praesenti ... Non actualis, quia furiosi possunt recipere Baptismum et eius effectum si sint dispositi, licet tunc non consentiant actualiter, puta si prius consentiant et post non dissentiant ante furiam."

Conclusion

Olivi, Scotus, and Ockham think that madness, in the natural course of things, has a bodily origin. Because of a change in the body, the sensory faculty is disturbed, and for that reason, the intellect of a madman does not act in the normal way, and the will lacks freedom. Olivi and Scotus refer to the possibility that a demon has caused a mental disorder by effecting the imagination, but most often they speak about naturally caused madness. On the whole, these three late medieval philosophers and theologians consider mental disorders as a part of their rational philosophical and theological theories, and at least in their texts, one cannot see anything which “antagonized generations of scientists, so that the schism between philosophy and mental science seemed irreparable” (Thomas F. Graham).

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RISTO SAARINEN

Wisdom as Intellectual Virtue: Aquinas, Odonis and Buridan

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes a distinction between intellectual and moral virtues. Intellectual virtues pertain to the perfection of the human mind. They are born and developed in us as a result of teaching. For this reason, they require time and experience (1103a12–17). Aristotle mentions five intellectual virtues: prudence and art are related to practical life, but the three other intellectual virtues of science, understanding and wisdom deal with our reaching and holding the truth in theoretical matters (e.g., 1139b14–18).

The intellectual virtue of science (or scientific knowledge: *epistêmê, scientia*) is concerned with general and necessary things which can be employed in proofs and syllogistic reasoning. It is the soul's readiness to present syllogistic proofs in necessary matters (1139b18–36). The starting-points and principles of this reasoning, however, must be understood intuitively and inductively. Therefore we need another intellectual virtue, that of understanding (or intuitive insight: *nous, intellectus*) in order to grasp the principles from which all reasoning starts. The virtue of understanding is a readiness to conceive these principles (1140b30–1141a8).

Moreover, wisdom (*sophia, sapientia*) is the best mode of knowledge. Aristotle describes wisdom as that scientific knowledge which is concerned with the highest things. Wisdom is science and understanding which has the most valuable things as its object. Such wisdom is not concerned with some particular skill or expertise, but a wise person is so in the general and universal sense (1141a8–1141b8). For Aristotle, wisdom does not seem to be qualitatively different from science and understanding, but it is a combination of the two with regard to the highest and most general things. Wisdom unifies the different expertises acquired through the activities of science and understanding.

In Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, wisdom has a prominent position as the virtue of those persons who know about first principles and causes. "Wisdom is knowledge about certain causes and principles" (982a1–2). The "wise man knows all things ... although he has not knowledge of each of them individually." "Superior science is more of the nature of wisdom than the ancillary" (982a8–10, 16–17). Since God is a first principle, metaphysics and wisdom are the most divine science (983a1–10). Metaphysics and wisdom are thus related to the eternal, universal and immovable; Aristotle even calls metaphysics theology (1026a15–30).

In the following I will not focus on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* but on the medieval reception history of *Nicomachean Ethics*. I will survey some features of the scholastic

interpretation of the three intellectual virtues of science, understanding and wisdom. In particular, I will deal with the nature of wisdom as compilation of science and understanding. First I will look at Thomas Aquinas's definition of the three virtues in *Summa theologiae* and then compare it with two later commentaries on *Nicomachean Ethics*, namely those by Gerald Odonis and John Buridan.¹

Even though our sources are ethical writings, we cannot ignore *Metaphysics*. The scholastic authors were well aware of Aristotle's view of wisdom as metaphysics and theology. In addition, they continued other classical, Hellenistic, biblical and Augustinian traditions of interpreting the many-sided phenomenon of wisdom.

Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas asks "whether there are just three habits of speculative intellect, namely wisdom, scientific knowledge and understanding."² One counter-argument claims that wisdom is not a distinct habit but a mode of knowledge, another holds that scientific knowledge and understanding are one, and a third one says that opinions can also be called intellectual virtues. We will concentrate on the identity of wisdom as it is outlined in Thomas's answer.

In an Aristotelian manner, Thomas begins his response by stating that the speculative intellect can reach the truth in two ways: in the case of principles, the intellect perceives their truth immediately (*percipitur statim*). This first way is called understanding. Other truths must be achieved in the second way by means of reasoning and investigation that proceeds from principles. This task of demonstrating the conclusions from principles is the activity of scientific knowledge or "science." Thomas makes a distinction in this activity: it may either concern the last truths in some knowable matter or the ultimate truths with respect to all human knowledge. The first group distinguishes science, whereas the second group identifies wisdom. In this second group, wisdom is concerned with the "highest causes" (*altissimas causas*) and with that which is "knowable first and chiefly in its nature." Thus wisdom can set all things in order with its perfect and universal judgment based on the first causes. In the framework of this distinction, one can have different habits of scientific knowledge, but only one wisdom. In spite of the distinction, Thomas can admit that wisdom is a kind of science (*quaedam scientia*).³

In *Sententia libri Ethicorum* Thomas holds, in keeping with Aristotle, that wisdom is both understanding and science. As an insight concerning the principles, it is under-

1 For the relationships among the three authors, see Walsh (1975), and Saarinen (2003).

2 *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 57, a. 2.

3 *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 57, a. 2, resp., ad 1. For the translation of "scientia" as "science," see Stump (2003) 549.

standing; as an ability which concludes from principles it is science. Because wisdom is a virtue that deals with all branches of scientific knowledge (*virtus omnium scientiarum*), it is more eminent than common knowledge. For this reason, wisdom is distinct from common knowledge.⁴

Thomas's philosophical definition of the intellectual virtue of wisdom is not very elaborated. To a great extent, it simply follows Aristotle. In commenting upon the Aristotelian notion of wisdom Thomas does not make use of a wider theological view of wisdom. In *Summa theologiae*, this brief discussion on science and wisdom is nevertheless embedded into a broader theological context. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 11:2–3) include understanding, knowledge and wisdom. Aristotle's intellectual virtues thus have a theological counterpart. If science is considered as being a virtue, then we have learned and acquired it, but if it is considered as being a gift, we simply have received it without any virtuous elaboration on our part. In theology, gifts are normally considered to be higher and qualitatively better realities than virtues, since gifts have their origin in God as giver.⁵

The distinction between virtues and gifts is philosophically challenging, because it is not obvious in what sense intellectual capacities can be acquired as virtues. Repeated exercise and will-power are normally needed for the production of a virtue. How can we learn intuitive understanding or wisdom through such exercise? One is tempted to think that intellectual brightness is simply there as gift or talent. Without going deeper into this complicated matter, it should be kept in mind that, for Aquinas, human will plays a role even in the emergence of intellectual virtues. On the other hand, it is also clear that intellectual virtues are in many ways very different from actual moral virtues which are the main subject of ethics.⁶

Gerald Odonis

We have seen that the philosophical definition of wisdom in Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas does not manage to distinguish this highest intellectual virtue very clearly from understanding and science. Later scholastics struggled with the same problem. The first Franciscan commentator of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Gerald Odonis, asks “whether wisdom is simultaneously science and understanding.”⁷

Arguments against this opinion proceed from obvious conceptual problems. Two distinct virtues cannot be simultaneously called a third virtue. We may say that the

4 *Sententia libri Ethicorum* VI, lect. 5, n. 9.

5 Stump (2003) 350–351.

6 See Stump (2003) 339–350, and Reichberg (2002).

7 Gerald Odonis, *Sententia et expositio cum quaestionibus super libros Ethicorum* VI, q. 12: “Utrum simul sit [sapientia] scientia et intellectus,” ed. Venice 1500, 129^{ab}.

first part of wisdom is understanding and the second part science, but, given this, they cannot be simultaneously one wisdom. We may also say that wisdom is for the most part understanding or for the most part science, or that there are many different kinds of wisdom, but not that one and only wisdom is both science and understanding at the same time.⁸

In defending Aristotle's view, i.e., that wisdom nevertheless proceeds from the two other intellectual virtues, Odonis undertakes several qualifications. He first compares the "doctrine of wisdom" (*doctrina sapientialis*) with the doctrinal identity of logic and natural philosophy (*doctrina logicalis, naturalis*).⁹ Wisdom and logic are distinguished from other doctrines with regard to the generality of their subject matter. Because of this generality, wisdom and logic can question their own axiomatic principles, whereas other sciences cannot. Other sciences concentrate on making proofs which proceed from the enunciated axioms, but logic and wisdom both enunciate their principles and make proofs. The strategy of making proofs with regard to the principles consists in showing that the negation of the enunciated principles is false, as Aristotle remarks e.g. in *Metaphysics* IV 4. In this sense wisdom, like the logic of refutations, employs both the mode of intuitive understanding and the mode of scientific proof.¹⁰

Wisdom and natural philosophy, or physics, are connected with one another and distinguished from other branches of doctrine in their treatment of causality. Other sciences make proofs on the basis of causality (*per causas*), but they do not treat causes as such (*de causis*). Wisdom and natural philosophy discuss causes as one subject matter of their doctrine. They employ causality in making proofs, but, in addition to this general procedure of science, they have a different relationship to the very phenomenon of causality. Other sciences "accept" causality as their point of departure, but wisdom and natural philosophy can also conclude that there is such a thing as causality. Thus their acceptance of causality as conclusion differs from its presupposition as principle.¹¹ In this remark we thus see how wisdom employs both understanding and science.

The connection of wisdom and logic concerns the order of knowledge, whereas the connection between wisdom and natural philosophy deals with the order of being.

8 *Ibid.*, 129^{vb}–130^{ra}.

9 *Ibid.*, 130^{va}. "Doctrina sapientialis" is probably synonymous with metaphysics. "Doctrina naturalis" is sometimes referred to as "phisica."

10 *Ibid.*, 130^{ra}: "Sciendum ergo quod doctrina logicalis et doctrina sapientialis conveniunt ad invicem et differunt ab aliis doctrinis in generalitate ut habetur 4. metaphisice ... Ipse namque possunt arguere contra negantes principia, non tamen alie doctrine ut habet 1. phisicorum et 4. metaphisice. Ideo alie se habent ad sua principia enunciative et non probative ... Iste tamen due sua principia probant et enunciant. Et ideo intellectus harum doctrinarum inducit modum scientie per eo quod ad ipsum inducunt probationes." Cf. *Metaph.* 1106a12–13.

11 Odonis, *ibid.*, 130^{ra}.

Therefore, the nature of wisdom as indivisible unity of understanding and science is twofold. It first has to do with the phenomenon of both enunciating and making proofs in matters that are most general. In this activity wisdom is comparable to logic. Second, it is related to the phenomenon of both understanding what causality is and employing causality in making proofs. In this activity wisdom can be compared to natural philosophy.¹²

In addition, both logic and natural philosophy lack something that proper wisdom as unity of understanding and science possesses. Logic does not treat the aetiology of causes (*redditiva causarum*); physics does not treat the first causes as such. Logic thus lacks the treatment of causes and physics the treatment of first principles. For these reasons, we need a distinct habit of wisdom which is similar to these two other branches of knowledge but not identical with either of them.¹³

We see that Odonis's discussion of the identity of Aristotelian wisdom is more elaborated and systematic than Thomas's. At the same time, its basic elements remain similar to Aquinas. As in Thomas, wisdom is concerned with the highest causes and first principles. Through a longer comparison with logic and physics, however, Odonis organizes the discussion of Thomas and Aristotle in a more systematic fashion. He formulates an opinion according to which the identity of wisdom consists of several partial identities which together yield a new identity. Some very general branches of knowledge, that is, logic and physics, are concerned with both understanding and science. Wisdom is similar to both logic and physics, but not identical with either of them. Therefore, we must establish a new branch of knowledge, *doctrina sapientialis*, or metaphysics.

John Buridan

In a brief article, it is not possible to trace all different sources which later scholastics employ in their discussion of wisdom.¹⁴ I will only show how the discussion begun by Aristotle and Thomas acquires a more systematic elaboration in some 14th-century commentaries on *Nicomachean Ethics*. At the same time, it is important to see how the focus of the discussion remains relatively unchanged. After Thomas, the problems

¹² *Ibid.*, 130^{ra}, tertio, quarto.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 130^{ra}: "Quinto sciendum est quod logica quamvis probet sua principia non immo dicitur intellectus et scientia eque proprie sicut sapientia que non est de causis ut redditiva causarum. Physica vero quamvis sit de causis et sit redditiva causarum non tamen est de primis causis simpliciter nec redditiva primarum causarum simpliciter. Et immo quia doctrine logicali deficit causarum consideratio et doctrine naturali causarum primarum et versabilium principiorum consideratio. Immo nec ista nec illa dicuntur sapientia nec aliquis unus habitus qui proprie sit intellectus et scientia eo modo quo competit sapientie."

¹⁴ For a general description of Odonis's and Buridan's view of virtue and ethics, see Kent (1995), and Zupko (2003) esp. 227–242.

become more elaborated, but they nevertheless remain the same problems. John Buridan's influential *Quaestiones super decem libros Ethicorum* is a paradigmatic example of the dynamics of both innovative enrichment and remaining coherence.

John Buridan asks the same question as Odonis, namely "whether wisdom is understanding and science."¹⁵ Arguments against this claim are similar to those in Odonis's commentary. Buridan, however, does not give one definite answer to the question but concludes that one can distinguish wisdom from understanding and science in many ways.¹⁶ He outlines no less than three different ways to respond. In doing this, he repeatedly employs expressions like "some people say that." We may assume that all three ways were debated in Buridan's times and are in that sense his sources.

According to the first way, we may claim that in scientific demonstrations we need, in addition to understanding and science, a third notion. This third notion enables us to connect principles and conclusions in a proper way. We may prove that some conclusion is true, but in order to see that it is true because of the truth of the principles, we need wisdom.¹⁷

The third notion is thus an additional quality of scientific knowledge which enables us to grasp the causal relationship. In addition to (1) the principles achieved through understanding and (2) the conclusions derived by virtue of science, systematic knowledge needs (3) an adequate grasp of underlying, systematic causalities. This grasp is called wisdom. Buridan employs the following example: it is one thing to know that the earth is situated between the sun and the moon; another thing to know that the moon is eclipsed; and a third thing to know how this eclipse is caused by the earth's position between sun and moon. This third notion is required for scientific knowledge in *Posterior Analytics* I 2 when Aristotle says that knowing a thing means that we know its proper causes.¹⁸

One may remark against the first way that, if this were generally the case, we would need wisdom in all scientific demonstrations. But Aristotle says both in *Ethics* (VI 7) and in *Metaphysics* (I 1) that wisdom pertains to the things that are highest by nature. To this objection Buridan replies that, according to Aristotle, we may speak about

15 John Buridan, *Quaestiones super decem libros Ethicorum* VI, q. 12: "Utrum sapientia sit intellectus et scientia," ed. Paris 1513, 127^b.

16 *Ibid.*, 127^b–128^{ra}, e.g., "Multi sunt modi distinguendi sapientiam ab intellectu et scientia." These "modi" are also called "modi dicendi" or "ways" (via).

17 *Ibid.*, 128^{ra}.

18 *Ibid.*, 128^{ra}: "Et hec tertia notitia pertinet ad sapientiam. Licet enim he tres noticie concurrant in eadem demonstrationem, tamen formaliter distinguuntur. Aliud enim est cognoscere quod terra interposita est inter solem et lunam, et aliud quod luna eclipsatur, et aliud quod ipsa eclipsatur propter dictam terre interpositionem. Et illa tertia noticia notavit Aristoteles in diffinitione ipsius scire primo posteriorum quando dicit et quam illius est causa." Cf. *An. post.* 71b10–12.

wisdom in particular fields of expertise. This is qualified as particular wisdom, whereas in metaphysics we deal with wisdom as such, as a proper intellectual virtue.¹⁹ Buridan grants, however, that at least in physics and logic we may speak of distinct wisdom. Even then we can say that in metaphysics wisdom is more *simpliciter* because of its highest subject matter. This resembles the way we call Paul an Apostle *simpliciter*, that is, without claiming that there would be no other apostles.²⁰

The first way teaches that wisdom is not formally understanding and science, but rather “materially.” In addition to these two notions, we need a third notion which provides our intellect with a sufficient idea of causality, thus organising scientifically the principles obtained through understanding and the conclusions derived through inference.²¹

Buridan here applies Aristotle’s definition of scientific knowledge in *Posterior Analytics* I 2. It is not enough to find accidental correlations between, for instance, the earth’s particular positions and the eclipses of the moon. A scientist needs additional wisdom in order to grasp the underlying systematic causality between his points of departure on the one hand and his rational inferences on the other. With the “third notion” of wisdom the scientist can realize how the earth’s shadow causes the moon to be eclipsed. Knowing a thing means that we know its cause or explanation. This capacity is ascribed to wisdom in Buridan’s first way.

Buridan’s second way defines wisdom as an acquired habit of the intellect. This habit is discussed in Aristotle’s philosophical metaphysics.²² Metaphysics deals with the most general doctrines, that is, first principles, God and intelligences. Unlike other sciences, metaphysics and logic can question their own principles. One should not think that the phenomenon of questioning the principles aims at false sophistry. On the contrary, logic and wisdom can employ an “elenctic” inference, that is, a method by which one can falsify the contradictory opposite of a true principle and, consequently, affirm the true principle. As Aristotle shows in *Sophistici elenchi*, this mode of inference is not sophistry, but a method of discovering and eliminating false principles.²³

Like wisdom, metaphysics is characterized by a twofold attitude to the principles. On the one hand, wisdom acts like understanding, that is, it does not seek proofs but

19 Buridan, *ibid.*, 128^{ra-rb}.

20 *Ibid.*, 128^{rb}.

21 *Ibid.*, 128^{rb}: “Diceretur igitur quod sapientia non est formaliter intellectus et scientia, sed quasi materialiter et suppositive quia non secundum noticiam principii nec secundum noticiam conclusionis dicitur sapientia formaliter sed secundum noticiam terciam qua cognosco non solum hoc esse et illud sed hoc esse propter aliud.”

22 *Ibid.*, 128^{rb}: “Alio modo potest dici quod sola methaphysica dicitur sapientia si loquamur solum de habitibus intellectualibus nobis humanitus acquisitis prout de eis loquitur Aristoteles.”

23 *Ibid.*, 128^{rb}. Cf. *Metaph.* 1106a12–13 and *Soph. el.* 165a1–5.

has an immediate inclination to the truth as such. On the other hand, wisdom acts like science in employing the elenctic method through which it can identify the true principles.²⁴ We see that the second way resembles Odonis's discussion insofar as the comparison with elenctic logic is made, but Buridan here enriches Odonis's logical remarks.

The third way of defining wisdom proceeds from the observation that Aristotle does not restrict his discussion to the principles of various disciplines, but wants to include the first principle of being, God, as well.²⁵ Wisdom, therefore, deals with the most difficult and admirable of divine things. Many have said that we can only ascend to the higher and separate substances through the knowledge received by our senses. On the other hand, since the separate substances are very different from our perceptions, we need something else in addition to them. This something is provided by the "natural light" of *intellectus*, which is capable of providing us with a better "notion" of separate substances than sense-perception alone.²⁶

In this way Aristotle's metaphysics, or wisdom, is characterized by a twofold approach towards separate substances, or God. Science, on the one hand, relies on the evidence of sense-perception and makes its inferences on the basis of such evidence. Understanding, on the other hand, employs a non-perceptive light which endows it with a possibility to grasp the nature of these substances. In this sense, too, wisdom appears as both understanding and science when it is related to the first principle of being.²⁷

Buridan finally remarks that the three ways do not exclude each other. In his brief responses to the counter-arguments he concludes again that wisdom is not formally understanding or science, but only materially.²⁸ Following the third way, one may say that wisdom is a habit relating to those principles which are neither immediately at our disposal (understanding) nor indirectly knowable through mediating

24 Buridan, *ibid.*, 128^{rb}: "Ex quibus apparet quod methaphysica dupliciter habet ad huiusmodi principia. Uno modo per modum intellectus in quantum concedit ea sine probatione ex sola naturali inclinatione intellectus ad ipsum verum. Aliomodo per modum scientie in quantum habet viam ad arguendum de ipsis elenchice contra negantes ea. Ideo sapientia simul dicitur intellectus et scientia."

25 *Ibid.*, 128^{rb-va}: "Nam Aristoteles non solum vult quod sapientia sit intellectus et scientia circa prima doctrine principia, sed etiam circa prima principia essendi que sunt deus et intelligentie." Cf. *Metaph.* 983a1-10.

26 Buridan, *ibid.*, 128^{va}.

27 *Ibid.*, 128^{va}: "Dicunt igitur isti quod methaphysica que secundum Aristotelis vocatur sapientia in quantum versatur circa substantias separatas habet se ad huiusmodi substantias primo per modum scientie in quantum non potest nisi per sensibilia venire in noticiam illarum. Secundo per modum intellectus in quantum ultra sensibilibium exigentiam virtutem proprii luminis sapit naturas earum."

28 *Ibid.*, 128^{va}.

inferences (science). The habit of wisdom employs both the mode of immediate intuition, or understanding, and the mode of scientific knowledge through inference in order to grasp these principles. In this sense wisdom is both understanding and science.²⁹

Concluding Remarks

The various interconnections among Aristotle's theory of science, ethics and metaphysics are essential for Buridan. His discussion of wisdom in *Quaestiones super decem libros Ethicorum*, Book VI, q. 12, is concerned with the understanding of wisdom as a virtue which is essential for both scientific knowledge and metaphysics. The former concern is prominent in his discussion of the "first way," the latter in his description of the "second" and "third" way. In spite of this integrative effort, Buridan's formal question remains the same as Odonis's, namely: how can we say that wisdom is both understanding and science? This question does not stem from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* nor from *Posterior Analytics*, but from the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

It is evident that Odonis employs Aquinas and that Buridan employs both Aquinas and Odonis. On the other hand, all three authors are remarkably independent from their predecessors. We must keep in mind that Buridan explicitly says that he is exposing various opinions of his colleagues. But even so, we can see how a creative enrichment and systematization takes place during the elaboration of this one issue. For these reasons, one cannot just conclude that a later author is "dependent" on some earlier author. The nature of dependence must be more carefully studied before anything more can be said concerning the actual doctrinal position of a given author.

Given that wisdom is an extremely rich philosophical and theological topic which has occupied Western thinkers belonging to various traditions, it is remarkable that Aquinas, Odonis and Buridan can all focus on Aristotle's specific view of wisdom as intellectual virtue. They do not bring in, for instance, the discussion about spiritual gifts and talents, but concentrate on the identity of this intellectual virtue in its relationship to understanding and science. Certainly, Aquinas speaks of theological wisdom elsewhere in his *Summa theologiae*, as we already remarked. Odonis mentions theological materials in his previous question.³⁰ Even Buridan has some theological

29 *Ibid.*, 128^{va}: "Vel dicendum est secundum tertiam viam modo consimili scilicet quod sapientia non est formaliter intellectus neque scientia, sed est habitus circa talia que nec ex se tamen notificabilia sunt nobis, nec tamen virtute mediorum per que oportet nos duci in noticiam ipsorum, sed secundum utrumque modum simul propter quod simul participat modum seu virtutem intellectus et scientie."

30 Odonis, *Sententia et expositio cum quaestionibus super libros Ethicorum* VI, q. 13: "Utrum sapi-

leanings in his postulate of natural light in the “third way.”

In spite of these theological indications, wisdom is, in the texts analysed above, considered as a philosophical topic. The integration of this topic into the general Aristotelian framework gets the primary attention of all three scholastics. In this integrative work theology does not disappear completely, but it keeps a low profile. Maybe this phenomenon is essential for genuine philosophical work. One need not abandon theology completely, but one should, while working as philosopher, mention theological topics only in passing.

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entia sit intellectualis virtus,” 129^{va-vb}. This question contains a list of theological sentences, e.g., “per sapientiam homo fiat contemptor mundi” and “per sapientia sapiens fiat amicus dei” (both 129^{vb}).

JOËL BIARD

John Buridan and the Mathematical Demonstration*

Even though the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics* had been translated into Latin by the twelfth century, it is only in the following century that these works seem to have aroused the interest of the medieval masters.¹ The commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* by Robert Grosseteste, written at Oxford in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, would remain a reference for most of the later commentaries.² Beyond the commentaries that are written about them, the *Analytics* exert a decisive influence on the conception of science that was then developing in the universities. Whether it be grammar, natural science or other disciplines, the model of scientificity is that of the demonstration as Aristotle had expounded it in the *Posterior Analytics*. But from the commentaries of that time, the status of the mathematical demonstration is at the same time emblematic and a source of questions. In fact, this problematic status finds its origin in the Aristotelian text itself, which has a complex relationship with Euclidian mathematics. When he establishes the theory of demonstration and of science, Aristotle takes mathematics as a model. Such is the case when he evokes the requirements of presupposed knowledge,³ he always gives mathematical examples when he refers to basic terms (such as the number) or to first propositions (axioms and theses); the term “axiom” itself (an immediate principle the possession of which is indispensable) has a mathematical origin.⁴ Even more than the examples, it is the very conception of the deductive structure that owes much to mathematics, here considered in its Euclidian form: certain principles having been laid down, the conclusions necessarily follow, a scheme whose implementation requires definitions, postulates or propositions . . .⁵ Already with Aristotle, the situation

* English translation by Angela Axworthy (Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance, Tours), revised by Robert Whiting (University of Helsinki).

1 See Dod (1982), in particular p. 69; de Rijk (1990).

2 Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarius in Posteriorum Analyticorum libros*, ed. Rossi.

3 See *An. post.* I 1, 71a2–5: “All teaching and all intellectual learning come about from already existing knowledge. This is evident if we consider it in every case; for the mathematical sciences are acquired in this fashion, and so is each of the other arts.” Transl. Barnes, 1.

4 See *An. post.* I 2, 72a17, transl. Barnes, 4.

5 See *An. post.* I 10, transl. Barnes, 15–17. Indeed, Euclid's *Elements*, the composition of which corresponds *par excellence* to such a structure, must have been composed only during the third century, but it is admitted that they must have been compiled from knowledge, even from previous treatises, that Aristotle could have known.

is, however, paradoxical, because if mathematics is not unfamiliar to him, he himself does not act as a mathematician, and each theoretical science comes under a different genus because of his conception of the division of the sciences. He does call on a few mathematical formulations in Book VII of the *Physics*, but in a limited way. The natural sciences which Aristotle is fond of do not accommodate themselves well to an axiomatic approach. This paradox repeats itself, even expands in the Latin Middle Ages. It seems that a good part of mathematics has developed outside the curriculum of the Faculty of Arts. Certainly, the first Oxonian commentators seem highly interested in mathematics, be it Robert Grosseteste or Roger Bacon, but it was not the same for all the masters who afterwards commented the *Analytics*. Nevertheless, the link established by Aristotle was not undone. Consequently, no theory of science could avoid being confronted by the mathematical model. The paradox or the difficulty is intensified owing to the fact that it is the syllogism that formally expresses this deductive structure which, combined with the evidence of the premises, must provide the scientificity. The question of the mode of scientificity of mathematics, or of the nature of its demonstration, then becomes the question of the nature of the “mathematical syllogism”—even though real mathematics includes very few syllogisms! Yet, Robert Grosseteste does not hesitate to write: “Only in mathematics do we have science and demonstration in the highest and principal sense.”⁶

John Buridan is not a mathematician either, unlike Nicole Oresme or John of Murs. Indeed, he writes a few questions on the point or on the continuum, but their object is not clearly mathematical, and such developments remain scarce in his work. However, his epistemological thinking inevitably leads him to specify the object and the nature of mathematical science. This sometimes occurs within the framework of passages dedicated to the division of the sciences.⁷ But he also approaches the question of the mode of demonstration. We find indications in several passages of his *Questions on the Analytics*, but it is especially in the eighth treatise of his *Small Sums of Logic* (*Summulae logicales* or *Summulae dialecticae*) that this problem is confronted.

Mathematics and the Demonstration by the Reason

John Buridan examines the nature of the mathematical demonstration within the framework of the eighth chapter of treatise VIII, the treatise on demonstration. This chapter is concerned with *propter quid* demonstrations, demonstrations by the reason—the reason why something is the case. In the sixth section, John Buridan raises two doubts about mathematical demonstrations. The first doubt concerns the question of

6 Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarius*, p. 179: “In solis enim mathematicis est scientia et demonstratio maxime et principaliter dicta.”

7 See Biard (2004).

knowing if the mathematical demonstration is a demonstration “by the reason why” (*propter quid*), the second one is of knowing if mathematics demonstrates by the formal cause. In doing this, he initiates a specific reflection about the mathematical demonstration that goes beyond the indications that could be found with Robert Grosseteste or Roger Bacon.

The first question may seem surprising. Is mathematics since Aristotle, as we have said, not the archetypal model of scientificity? Now the demonstration “by the reason why” is the demonstration *par excellence* since it displays the cause or the causes. Later, this status will even be reinforced by the idea of *demonstratio potissima* (the most powerful demonstration). Let us remember that this notion, suggested in a few passages of Aristotle, does not signify a specific form of demonstration besides the *quia* and the *propter quid*, but qualifies the highest forms of demonstrations in a wide sense. Some developments of Themistius, transmitted by Averroes, will give a more restricted sense to that notion, and it will then refer to a demonstration that shows the fact (as the *quia* demonstration does) at the same time as it makes the cause known (as the *propter quid* demonstration does). It is in this sense that it will be used in the Renaissance, and reserved to mathematics. But to assign to the *potissima* demonstration a specific status, distinct from the two types mentioned by Aristotle, is not generally a widespread usage among the masters of the thirteenth and the fourteenth century. Buridan evokes this conception in the course of an argument within a question on the *Posterior Analytics*,⁸ but most of the time he uses the expression “most powerful demonstration” as a synonym for “demonstration by the reason why.” There is a passage where he explains the connection between these two notions:

It must be known that sometimes all *propter quid* demonstrations are called “the most powerful,” when we compare their genus to the genus of the other demonstrations; but sometimes, when *propter quid* demonstrations are compared to one another, they are not all said to be the most powerful, but one more powerful than another; for example, as it has been said in the first tractate, an ostensive *propter quid* demonstration is more powerful than a demonstration leading to the impossible, and an affirmative demonstration more than a negative demonstration, though each of them is a *propter quid* demonstration ...⁹

8 *Quaestiones in duos Aristotelis libros Posteriorum Analyticorum* (quoted from now on: *Qu. Anal. Post.*) II, q. 7: “... medium in demonstratione potissima debet dicere quid est et propter quid est, ut videtur velle Aristotiles, secundo hujus.” The immediately preceding argument supposes that in mathematics there are some *demonstrationes potissimae*.

9 *Qu. Anal. Post.* I, q. 26: “... sciendum est quod aliquando omnes demonstrationes propter quid vocantur ‘potissimae’, scilicet comparando genus earum ad genera aliarum demonstrationum; aliquando tamen, comparando demonstrationes propter quid ad invicem, non omnes dicuntur potissimae, sed una potior alia; verbi gratia, ut declaratum est primo huius,

We thus note that either the two notions are assimilated, or the idea of “most powerful demonstration” has a meaning which is only comparative, rather than designating a particular class of demonstrations. But from this, the question becomes more paradoxical, because it makes one wonder if mathematical demonstrations are really *propter quid!*

The first paragraphs of this chapter have specified how it should have been understood that the demonstration “by the reason why” is a “knowledge by the cause.” It is not sufficient to understand it in an epistemic sense, in the sense that the knowledge of the premises is the cause of the knowledge of the conclusion. The cause here must have a real bearing: “... it is required ... that the causal term placed in the premises and in the conclusion signify the cause of things’ being ...”¹⁰ Thus, the demonstration “by the reason why” of the lunar eclipse must produce the knowledge of why the moon is eclipsed. I must not only conclude that each time the earth is interposed, there is an eclipse, but that there is an eclipse *because* the earth is interposed. This becomes manifest by the causal form of the conclusion, which is made possible because the major premise is also a causal proposition: “... and it is for that reason that we should add a causal predicate with the sign of causality.”¹¹

Unlike William of Ockham, Buridan does not content himself with assimilating demonstration “by the reason why” and *a priori* demonstration. In the example of the lunar eclipse, the only *propter quid* demonstration is the following:

Every deficiency of the light of the moon on its half turned towards the sun, whenever it occurs, comes about because of the earth interposed; but every lunar eclipse is a deficiency of the light of the moon on its half turned towards the sun; therefore every lunar eclipse, whenever it occurs, comes about because of the earth interposed.¹²

demonstratio ostensiva propter quid est potior demonstratione ad impossibile, et demonstratio affirmativa demonstratione negativa, licet utraque sit propter quid, et demonstratio in prima figura demonstratione in secunda figura, ceteris paribus ...”

- 10 John Buridan, *Summulae: De demonstrationibus* [from now on quoted: *Summulae*, VIII], 8, ed. de Rijk, p. 165: “... requiritur quod terminus causalis positus in praemissis et conclusionem significet causam essendi ...” Transl. Klima, 754.
- 11 *Summulae*, VIII, 8, 1, p. 167: “... et propter hoc est apponendum praedicatum causale, et cum nota causalitatis.” Transl., 755.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 167: “Omnis defectus luminis in medietate lunae versa ad solem, quandocumque est, est propter terram interpositam etc.; sed omnis eclipsis lunae est defectus luminis in medietate lunae versa ad solem; ergo omnis eclipsis lunae, quandocumque est, est propter terram interpositam.” Transl., 756. On the other hand, the following reasoning truly is *a priori*, but not *propter quid* (*ibid.*): “quandocumque est defectus luminis in medietate lunae versa ad solem, luna eclipsatur; sed quandocumque est terra diametraliter interposita inter solem et lunam, est defectus luminis in medietate lunae versa ad solem; ergo quandocumque

Certain demonstrations can nevertheless be considered as “by the reason why,” even if the conclusion and one of the premises do not have such a causal form:

The other member of the disjunction provides yet another mode, namely, that it is not necessary for the conclusion, nor for one of the premises, to be a causal proposition, but merely that the middle term should appropriately signify the cause of things’ being in the way signified by the conclusion.¹³

The major premise would then express that the earth is “interposed according to the diameter between the sun and the moon,” for this itself expresses the *causa essendi* of that which is to be explained:

... the earth being diametrically interposed between the sun and the moon, which is signified by the middle term of this argument, is the proper cause because of which the moon is eclipsed in its opposition to the sun, and while it is either in the head or the tail of the Dragon.¹⁴

Buridan notes that Aristotle prefers using this second way of expressing the cause or reason of the phenomena. But he himself seems to prefer the first way of expressing the demonstrative syllogism by the reason why.¹⁵

If such is the *propter quid* demonstration, does mathematics satisfy these requisites? Buridan answers that this is certainly what Aristotle seems to say, but it does not seem so to him!

And it is obvious that Aristotle and others commonly say so. It seems to me, however, that strictly speaking this is not so ...¹⁶

terra est diametraliter inter solem et lunam, luna eclipsatur.”

13 *Ibid.*, p. 168: “Alia autem pars disiunctivae ponit alium modum, scilicet quod nec oporteat conclusionem esse propositionem causalem, nec aliquam praemissarum, sed quod medium significet appropriate causam essendi ita sicut per conclusionem significatur.” Transl., 757.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 168: “... esse terram diametraliter interpositam inter solem et lunam *etc.*, quod significatur per medium huius argumenti, est causa propria propter quod luna eclipsatur in oppositione eius ad solem, ipsa existente in capite vel cauda Dragonis.” Transl., 757.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 169: “His tamen non obstantibus, apparet mihi quod prior modus formaliter concludit et facit scire quod hoc est propter illud; ideo formaliter et propriissime facit scire conclusive propter quid. Secundus autem modus non est, nisi nota causalitatis subintelligatur vel exprimitur ...”

16 *Summulae*, VIII, 8, 6, p. 180: “Et apparet quod Aristotiles et alii communiter dicunt quod sic. Tamen videtur mihi quod hoc non est, proprie loquendo ...” Transl., 767.

What are his reasons? He acknowledges that the knowledge of the premises truly is the cause of the knowledge of the conclusion, but he reminds us that this is not sufficient. We have already noted that Buridan is concerned, more than Aristotle himself was, with distinguishing the epistemic causality and the real causality signified by the propositions that come into the demonstration. The first does not suffice to qualify a demonstration as a demonstration “by the cause” since it is required of every demonstration, whatever it may be. It is presupposed by the definition itself of the demonstration as a “syllogism producing knowledge” (*faciens scire*). But if we are looking for a relation of true causality, it cannot be found in mathematics:

Rather, it is necessary that the things signified by the terms and the propositions be related as cause and effect, and that *this* thing truly exist because of *that* thing; but this is not the case in mathematics.¹⁷

The justification is established through examples. The first one is the example of the construction of an equilateral triangle from the segment of a straight line. Two equal circles are drawn from each extremity, their radius being equal to this segment, and the point of intersection will be the third vertex of the triangle. We demonstrate that this triangle is equilateral because all the lines drawn from the centre of a circle to its circumference are equal. This example is carefully chosen; for the demonstration supposes additional constructions which do not pertain to the essence of the triangle. Buridan can then easily affirm that the circles and their circumference are not the cause of the equality of the triangle’s sides. For this we could resort to divine power which would annihilate all surfaces exterior to the triangle, but it suffices to suppose “that was made only this triangle and that these circles were never made.” The conclusion goes without saying:

Therefore, these lines, or the fact that they are equal, in no genus of cause depend on those circles or their circumferences, or the fact that they are drawn from the center to the circumference; nor is the former because of the latter, for the one would exist even without the other.¹⁸

From there, Buridan proposes another example that allows him, implicitly, to generalize: it concerns the property that every triangle has of having three angles equal to two right

17 *Ibid.*, p. 180: “Sed oportet quod sit causa ad causatum ex parte rerum significatarum per propositiones et terminos, et quod hoc vere sit propter illud; et hoc non invenitur in mathematicis.” Transl., 767.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 181: “Ergo istae lineae, vel eas esse aequales, in nullo genere causae dependent ab illis circulis vel a circumferentiis eorum, vel a ductione earum de centro ad circumferentiam, etc.; nec est hoc propter illud, quia etiam esset sine illo.” Modified transl., 767.

angles. The reason is that an exterior angle is equal to its two opposite angles. Here again “the exterior angle has no causality on this triangle,” since this triangle would stay the same even if everything that is exterior to it were to be annihilated. Here neither, as a consequence, “is there causality in regard to things.”¹⁹

Thus, by insisting on the exterior constructions, Buridan revealed the extrinsic character, relative to mathematical objects, of the “reasons” which establish the demonstration of their properties. However, he still needs to explain how and why we usually categorize mathematical demonstrations among the *propter quid* demonstrations. The first reason is that they proceed from propositions which are first and convertible;²⁰ but this is not sufficient because it could be the case for certain *quia* demonstrations. The second reason sets an analogy: the most powerful demonstrations in the other sciences are those which proceed from the cause to that which is caused, and they are called *propter quid*; in mathematical sciences, “where there is no difference between the terms signifying the cause and what is caused,” we will call *propter quid* the most powerful ones; now in this field, it is those that are made valid by the definitions of the terms, which are known and admitted in these sciences, that are the most powerful. We then proceed here by pure analogy: we call *propter quid* the “most powerful” ones, because in the sciences where a true relation of cause to caused is considered, the most powerful one gives the cause or reason.

Ultimately, a third reason makes us return to the epistemic causality, but with specifications that we did not have earlier. The knowledge of the premises causes the knowledge of the conclusion; but in the sciences where the cause is different from that which is caused, if this priority corresponds to a priority in regard to the things signified, the demonstration is called “by the reason why.” Since we do not have here any true distinction between the cause and what is caused, it is only the priority of the knowledge of the premises over the knowledge of the conclusion that leads to speaking about demonstration “by the reason why.”

All things considered, we can see that the mathematical demonstration corresponds very little to the idea that Buridan has of a real *propter quid* demonstration; it is only by analogy that these demonstrations can be called so. Indeed, here, no true relation of causality forms the basis of the demonstration.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 181: “... non est ibi causalitas ex parte rerum, quoniam angulus extrinsecus nullam habet causalitatem super illum triangulum, nec super illos angulos eius intrinsecos, nec super aequalitatem eorum ad duos rectos, quia nihilominus haec omnia essent, destructo illo angulo extrinseco et omni magnitudine extrinseca illi triangulo annihilata.”

20 Buridan speaks about propositions “secundum quod ipsum.” This notion is difficult to translate; it implies that the subject is considered according to the totality of what it is. See *Summulae*, VIII, 6, 4, p. 145–147; transl., 736.

Mathematics and the Formal Cause

The second doubt raised is the following: “Do mathematical demonstrations proceed by means of the formal cause?”²¹ In a certain way, we could think that the answer to the first doubt invalidates this one. Nevertheless, it has been admitted that by analogy mathematical demonstrations are *propter quid*, which leaves the question of knowing “by which cause?” open. Especially, it is a common idea that such demonstrations only proceed by the formal cause, excluding other causes. This can already be encountered with Roger Bacon:

... mathematical properties are not demonstrated by the material cause, nor by the efficient nor by the final, but only by the formal cause.²²

For Roger Bacon, whose *Summulae dialectices* are by a few decades later than Robert Grosseteste’s commentary, in the demonstrative syllogism the cause must generally be of inference, of proof and of being.²³ Now the cause of being (*causa essendi*) can be material, formal, final or efficient and each of these causes can be used to define a property.²⁴ But any property cannot be defined according to any one of these four causes; and Bacon mentions then mathematical properties, which are only demonstrated by the formal cause, although conjoint with a matter in which they are found.²⁵ He will then develop this point by showing how the other kinds of cause are not relevant in mathematics.

The point that is most developed is the one concerning matter—even though Bacon here remains very far from the debates that will arise in the sixteenth century, after the rediscovery of Proclus’ commentary on Euclid’s *Elements*, about “imagined matter.” He has disregarded the *materia ex qua* and has established that the definition of the property certainly refers to the subject, but that the latter constitutes the matter *in qua*, not *ex qua*. But this still needs to be specified. In fact, the mathematician does not take into consideration the matter in which the property is found as *vera materia*, but, here again, only in an “analogical” way (*proportionaliter dicta*). Indeed, the mathematician does not consider the “real matter” of the line, for example wood or gold, but makes an abstraction of it. The conception of the subject of mathematics is here directly

21 See *ibid.*, transl., 769.

22 *Summulae dialectices Rogeri Baconis*, III, 1, ed. de Libera, p. 211: “... non demonstrantur passionēs mathematicae per causam materialem, nec efficientem, nec finalem, sed tantum per causam formalem.”

23 *Ibid.*, § 162, p. 209: “In [syllogismo] demonstrativo [sunt premissae] causa inferendi, probandi et essendi.”

24 *Ibid.*, § 165 and 169, p. 210.

25 *Ibid.*, § 173, p. 211.

inherited from Aristotelian abstractionism. In the same way—but this can be solved more rapidly—the mathematician does not consider the efficient cause, since the efficient cause is a principle of movement and of change, and that “the mathematician abstracts his things from movement and likewise from transformation.”²⁶ Finally, he does not consider the final cause, since in mathematics it is not a question of good or of end.²⁷ It has then been shown by elimination that the mathematical demonstration only brings formal causes into play. Indeed, Bacon has given few positive explanations on this point, but he refers to an example used earlier. It concerns the canonical example of the triangle and of the property of having three angles equal to two right angles. The means of the demonstration is here the very definition of the triangle: every plane figure contained within three segments of straight lines, having an extrinsic angle equivalent to its two opposite intrinsic angles, has three angles equal to two right angles; every triangle is a plane figure contained within three segments of straight lines; therefore every triangle has three angles equal to two right angles.²⁸

Similar indications occur in Buridan: He reminded us previously that the causes of the same thing are diverse, then he mentioned the efficient cause and the final cause of sleep. He was then speaking of “knowledge *propter quid efficienter*” and of “knowledge *propter quid finaliter*.”²⁹ But in the section concerning the mathematical demonstration, the initial lemma brings “by the reason” and “by the formal cause” instantly closer.³⁰

Buridan does not content himself with taking up themes that have been common for a century; he would give a stronger epistemological bearing to his thought. In a sense, he understands why other types of causes have been excluded, so that the formal cause will have found itself privileged. Evidently, the mathematician does not take into consideration the motor or the agent “under the concept (*secundum rationem*) according to which they are called mover or agent”³¹—which means that the production of the thing is not relevant, nor is its natural movement, for example the fact that a certain person has drawn the line. In the same way, the material is not to be taken into account (whether the line is made of wood, of chalk, etc.). The same applies to the end, in whatever sense it may be taken—neither in view of any good, nor in a general sense in view of which the thing may be produced—which does not have a direct influence on its mathematical properties. These arguments are classic. But while it is generally

26 *Ibid.*, §175, p. 211.

27 *Ibid.*, §176, p. 211.

28 See *ibid.*, §171, p. 210–211.

29 *Summulae*, VIII, 8, 3, p. 174.

30 *Summulae*, VIII, 8, 6, p. 180: “... dubitatur utrum ut in plurimum demonstrationes mathematicae debent dici propter quid et per causam formalem, sicut dici consuetum est.”

31 *Summulae*, VIII, 8, 6, p. 183; transl., 769.

concluded (and will still be concluded two centuries later) that only formal causality is relevant here, Buridan will also exclude the form: "... nor even the form under the concept according to which that is said to be strictly a form which informs the subject and inheres or does not inhere in it."³² This is justified because the ontological status of the mathematical thing, for example magnitude (*magnitudo*), is not taken into account:

For he does not consider whether magnitude inheres in substance or exists by itself, or whether it is identical with substance or distinct from substance.³³

Buridan places himself in a sort of general "abstractionist" perspective—in the sense that he would not recognize the separate existence of mathematical substances in the Platonist way. The real being of the *mathematicalia* is that of accidents inherent to natural substances. But, fundamentally, this question is not relevant for the mathematician. And so, for him, the mathematical object is not a "form," in whatever sense this term may be taken: the separation or non-separation, the accidental or substantial being, the identity real or not of the accident and of the substance, are so many questions that may interest the metaphysician, but not the mathematician. As for the properties of this "thing" which is magnitude, like the figure, here neither do we ask ourselves if it is or is not a form inherent to its subject. Consequently, the idea of "formal cause" does not make much sense, at least if it is taken literally, so in a general way the mathematician "in no way considers beings as to whether one is the cause of the other."³⁴

It is true that in another sense the mathematician does take into account all the sorts of causes—efficient, material, formal and final—but only from the point of view of magnitude and numbers.³⁵ In this way, Buridan reintroduces his conception of the non-subsistence of mathematical objects, which are in fact accidents (or properties of accidents) of real substances in the world. But the mathematician considers them *secundum rationem* (from the conceptual point of view) of magnitude and number.

Thus, it can be said that either the mathematician deals with all the kinds of causes (but only from the point of view that we have just mentioned), since natural substances are a matter for the four types of causes, or else with none of them. In any case, unlike what Roger Bacon had posited, no privileged link may be found with the formal cause:

32 *Ibid.*, p. 183: "... nec etiam de forma ea ratione qua dicitur proprie forma informans subiectum et inhaerens sibi vel non." Transl., 769.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 183 "Nihil enim considerat de magnitudine an sit inhaerens substantiae aut per se existens, aut an sit ipsa substantia an distincta a substantia." Transl., 769.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 183: "... omnino nihil considerat de entibus an hoc sit causa istius ..." Transl., 769.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 183: "... secundum rationes secundum quas dicuntur magnitudines et numeri ..."

And so, speaking of formal causes in the strict sense, the mathematician considers formal causes no more than any others ...³⁶

However, here again, John Buridan will try to find a justification for this commonly accepted idea. Oddly, he will find it in Plato. Plato, indeed, says Buridan, considered quidditative predicates as separate forms. That is why the noun “form” came to signify such quidditative predicates, whatever their status is. That is why Aristotle calls “forms” the “parts of the definition,” that is, the terms which compose it, namely the genera and the differences. This appellation is legitimate when we are looking for the form of composed substances. But, says Buridan, we have come to speak of form for the terms of any definition.³⁷ Thus, “we say of all mathematical definitions that they are by the form or by some forms.” And since the form, strictly speaking, is cause—namely formal cause—we can say that these definitions give the formal cause. Now as mathematical demonstrations often occur by the definitions, it can be said that the mathematician demonstrates by the formal cause. But this is ultimately admitted by Buridan at the cost of a certain number of shifts in meaning and metaphors. He notes himself that this can only be said in a remote sense (*remotiori intentione*).

Mathematics and Certainty

If knowing is knowing by the causes, the weakening of the link between mathematics and demonstration by the cause makes the status of the ideal of scientificity traditionally assigned to mathematics problematic. What are the consequences of this, concerning the certainty of the knowledge they provide? Because for Buridan, certainty is an essential aspect of the definition of science: “... we say that science differs from opinion firstly because every act of science has to occur with certainty and evidence.”³⁸ The questions concerning the mode of demonstration, concerning primacy among sciences and concerning certainty are related. Buridan speculates in a detailed manner about the types of certainty of mathematics in a question on the first book of the *Posterior Analytics*: “Are mathematical sciences more certain than the other sciences?”³⁹ The

36 *Ibid.*, p. 184: “Et ideo, proprie loquendo de causis formalibus, nihil plus considerat mathematicas causas formales quam alias causas, nec plus demonstrat per eas quam per alias causas.” Modified transl., 769–770.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 184: “Et ulterius elargita fuit haec transumptio, scilicet ad significandum omnes terminos definitionum, quicumque sint illi, nisi manifeste termini definitionis et terminus definitus significant differenter causas et causata.”

38 *Summulae*, VIII, 4, 4, p. 110: “... dicamus scientiam differre ab opinione primo quia oportet omnem scientiam esse cum certitudine et evidentia.” Modified transl., 706—I prefer to translate *scientia* here by “science” and not by “knowledge.”

39 *Qu. Anal. Post.* I, q. 25: “Utrum mathematicae scientiae sint aliarum scientiarum certissimae?”

positive response to the question is attributed to Aristotle in the *Analytics* and also to Averroes in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, for it is he who asserted that mathematics is foremost regarding the degree of certainty. Robert Grosseteste did not exactly state the question in these terms, but explaining a passage in which Aristotle distinguishes the sciences according to the greater or lesser chance of finding paralogisms in them,⁴⁰ he enumerates four causes of deception. The three last explanations of the *minor deceptio* are clearly related to mathematics; as for the first, if it is not explicitly stated, we can think that it is also used to separate mathematics from the other disciplines: the criterion is that in certain disciplines, we always argue in a syllogistic way, by mode and by figure, while others call on induction and other modes of argumentation, which can certainly be reduced to modes and figures, but not immediately, hence the increased chances of error. Mathematics, by its mode of argumentation (first cause), by the evidence (the proximity to the intellect) of “mathematical things” (second cause), by its universality (third cause), by the faster reduction to the principles (fourth cause), thus appears as the most certain science.⁴¹

Buridan’s answer to the question of certainty is more complex, and comes through the distinction of several senses in which we can speak of certainty in a science.

The first one is established from the point of view of the firmness and of the immutability in regard to the things signified. In this sense, metaphysics is more certain than the other sciences. This sense is paradoxical considering the fact that he does not seem to take into account the subjective aspect, or at least epistemic, of certainty—but the medieval concept of certainty is not opposed to truth as the subjective to the objective, as it will be the case in modern philosophy. What makes knowledge certain here is the object itself. Given that Aristotle has defined science by its eternal and necessary character, the immutability of its object is the first criterion.

The second sense is more related to knowledge procedures: one science is more certain than another if what it knows (*scibile suum*) leaves less room for doubt. In this sense, *propter quid* science is more certain than *quia* science. Buridan however introduces a nuance. According to the order of reasons, we could say, the science “by the reason why” (that is, strictly speaking, the science which proceeds from a demonstration “by the reason why,” *propter quid*) presupposes the science by the fact, so the latter still leaves the door open for certain doubts which the former has to remove. On the other hand, the science “by the reason why” is more difficult in such

40 Aristotle, *An. post.* I 12, 77b27–28, transl. Barnes, 20; Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarius*, I, 11, p. 178.

41 The idea of certainty is not of first importance (it is the ideas of error and of cause of error), but it appears in a negative way concerning natural sciences; see Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarius*, p. 179: “Similiter in naturalibus est minor certitudo propter mutabilitatem rerum naturalium.”

ways that it happens, “subjectively” we could say, that the science by the fact is more evident and more certain than the science by the reason.

The third sense is related to the evidence of the principles. A science will therefore be more certain than another if its principles are more obvious and if it presupposes nothing other than its principles. In this sense also, it seems (Buridan is cautious⁴²) that metaphysics is the most certain science. The other sciences, in contrast, either depend on it, or call on experience; their certainty is hence lesser.

The last sense is related to the mode of demonstration once given the principles. It depends on how rigorously the deductive form is observed.

While the two first senses have allowed us to establish the fact that depending on the point of view adopted, different sciences will be considered more certain, the latter two allow us to specify what the certainty of mathematics is. According to a thesis that we will constantly come across later, it is from the point of view of demonstrativity, of the mode of demonstration, that mathematics is the most certain science. This thesis, which is based on the idea that it is the hypothetical-deductive procedure that best satisfies the requirements of demonstration such as it has been received in the philosophical tradition, does not lead to the opposition between the primacy of such-and-such a science from the point of view of the object and the primacy of such-and-such another science from the point of view of certainty, as we will have with Blasius of Parma half a century later,⁴³ but leads to different types of certainty. Nevertheless, the traditional link between certainty and mathematics is preserved by Buridan, as it will be until the debates of the sixteenth century:

And then it must be conceded that mathematical demonstrations should be in the first degree of certainty, because the mathematical demonstrations respect to the greatest extent the syllogistic form and mode, and are based to the greatest extent on proper middle terms.⁴⁴

However, this aspect is clearly counterbalanced by what he says about the “certainty of the principles.” From this point of view, it is still metaphysics that is more certain. This primacy is expressed by the comparison with natural sciences, but Buridan adds that according to this criterion mathematics is also very uncertain: “I also believe that by that measure the mathematical science is very uncertain.”⁴⁵

42 See *Qu. Anal. Post.* I, q. 25: “Et tunc credo quod concedendum sit ...”

43 See *Questiones Blaxii de Parma super tractatus loyce magistri Petri Hyspani* I, 2.

44 John Buridan, *Qu. Anal. Post.* I, q. 25: “Et tunc esset concedendum quod mathematicae demonstrationes essent in primo gradu certitudinis, quia demonstrationes mathematicae maxime observant formam syllogisticam et modum, et maxime sunt ex propriis mediis.”

45 *Ibid.*: “Credo etiam quod isto modo mathematica scientia est multum incerta.”

What are the reasons for this lack of certainty? Generally speaking, we can mention the subordination to a superior science from which the principles would be received. In that case, it cannot be a matter of anything but metaphysics. This would not impede certainty if the principles received were themselves certain, whether this certainty be first (as the certainty of the principle of identity) or whether it be established elsewhere than in mathematics itself. But John Buridan does not stop here. He evokes presuppositions which, he says, are not accepted by everyone, and the evidence of which is not obvious. These presuppositions are of an ontological nature. It notably concerns the hypothesis of the continuum:

And many mathematical conclusions also need the exposition of something which is doubtful and by many not conceded, such as the fact that a line is not composed of points.⁴⁶

Some mathematical demonstrations presuppose the continuum (for example the operation of dividing a line in two equal parts would not always be feasible if the line were composed of an even number of points); but mathematics cannot demonstrate it. Can it be said that metaphysics establishes this procedure by demonstrating such a hypothesis? Nothing is less sure because a great number of masters justify the continuum only because the opposite hypothesis is incompatible with mathematics. This science then seems here to depend on a strong hypothesis, of which the only validity would be operational.

This is not surprising, given what we otherwise know about the Buridanian approach to mathematics. What needs to be pointed out about this passage on certainty is that Buridan does not end his presentation on the fourth and last sense, the one according to which mathematics is the most certain, but that he recapitulates by underlining rather its relative uncertainty—immediately after the passage previously quoted:

And if there is a doubt in these sorts of mathematical demonstrations, there is the highest certainty based on the supposition of the principles, and it is, so to speak, conditional certainty: if it is as established by the principles, then it is as established by the conclusion.⁴⁷

46 *Ibid.*: “et etiam multae conclusiones mathematicae indigent expositione eius quod est dubium et a multis non concessum, (ut) scilicet quod linea non sit composita ex punctis.”

47 *Ibid.*: “Et si est dubitatio in huiusmodi demonstrationibus mathematicis, est maxima certitudo ex suppositione principiorum, et est tamquam certitudo condicionalis quod si ita est sicut (principia ponunt, ita est sicut) conclusio ponit.”

Certainty is hence conditional. Indeed, with Aristotle as well, the certainty of a demonstration depends on the nature of the principles. But the principles must be necessary; if possible, self-evident or, if not, demonstrated elsewhere. Here the hypothetical-deductive nature shifts towards the conditional. According to John Buridan, physics is also endowed with a conditional evidence: it is an evidence according to the course of nature. Mathematics however is not concerned with the same type of supposition, but with a quasi-ontological position (not *quasi* in the sense of *almost*, but in the sense of *as if*), a presupposition of the nature of the object which is not founded metaphysically, but in the mathematical procedures themselves.

Conclusion

Buridan only saves the traditional theses on the mathematical demonstration at the cost of draconian reinterpretations that drain them of their initial meaning: this applies to the *propter quid* character as much as to the definition by the formal cause. The absence of relation between the cause and what is caused in regard to the things signified confers a metaphoric sense to the idea of demonstration by the reason why, *propter quid*, which should, strictly speaking, exhibit the real cause of the phenomena (or of the relation between subject and property). The exterior and artificial nature of the additional constructions, indispensable in a certain number of geometrical demonstrations, really shows that it is not such relationships which are at stake in mathematical properties. Neither is it a question here of formal cause in a strict sense, the object not being a substance, at least not considered as a substance; the form is here the essential predicate expressed in the definition which is used as the middle-term.

The main consequence is that the link between the conception of science and the mathematical model—a close link in the peripatetic tradition—tends to weaken. If the demonstration is the knowledge-producing syllogism, and if knowing is knowing by the causes, the cause must be considered in the proper sense according to the model of natural causality. But such a causality is not appropriate to the mathematical demonstration.

As a consequence, this leads to an original apprehension of the status of mathematics. Indeed, Buridan belongs to the “abstractionist” tradition inherited from Aristotle, but if the causal conception of demonstration only applies analogically to the mathematical demonstration, it is because of the status of the *mathematicalia* and because of the approach of the mathematician. Mathematical ideas do not have a separate being, so, from a certain point of view, mathematical properties are the properties of accidents which, ontologically, are inherent to substances. But this does not interest the mathematician at all. The mathematician, in his demonstrations, carries out constructions which are not contained in the essence of the “mathematical things” (the subject of the properties to be proved). In this way, Buridan once again puts forward

an operational conception of mathematics that can be found in several other parts of his work.⁴⁸ It is because the mathematician constructs circles, or draws a line which extends a side, that he can demonstrate such or such property of the triangle. These properties are not more intrinsic to the triangle's form than they are accidental; such categories are here inadequate. Thus emerges an original conception of the status of mathematics and of mathematical procedures which goes beyond the mere question, which was commonplace, concerning the substantial or accidental status of the subject of mathematics, and which gives an operational meaning to the idea of mathematical imagination.

This is at the cost of a redefinition of the mode of certainty of mathematics. Of course, Buridan conserves the idea according to which mathematics is the most certain science from the point of view of the mode of demonstration, in other words the deductive form. On the other hand, he introduces several senses according to which a science can be called certain, and the sense in which mathematics holds the first rank is only one out of a possible four. But his presentation tends to relativize, if not to minimize, this higher certainty that contributed to the status of ideal science assigned to mathematics in the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions.

Can it be said that Buridan minimizes the place and the function of mathematics? It is not sure. Maybe the status he confers to it, more extrinsic to the essence of things and to the relations of causality, defined from operational procedures such as measurement, is merely more adapted to the functions which mathematics takes on in new types of relationships with natural philosophy—whether it be the analysis of the intension and the remission of forms or of the treatises on the ratios in movements.

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48 See Biard (2002) and (2004).

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HENRIK LAGERLUND

What is Singular Thought? Ockham and Buridan
on Singular Terms in the Language of Thought

I

What does it mean to think about something singular? Is my thought of the cup on the table simply a thought of that cup, or does my thought of the cup involve general concepts as my description of the thought does? In other words, can singular thought be primary, or is universal thought always primary in some way? These are not simple questions and there is no consensus about their answers in contemporary philosophy of mind. To put it somewhat crudely, a line between the two positions visible in the latter question is drawn by the two metaphysical positions: realism and nominalism. If I am a realist about universals, then it is easy to think that universal thought and universal concepts must somehow be primary since perception (assuming some form of empiricism), it might be argued, gives me a direct access to the universals existing in nature. If I am, on the other hand, a nominalist, then I hold, of course, that there are no universals in nature. I must have generated them myself somehow in my mind (again assuming some form of empiricism). In this case, it seems natural to think that singular thought is somehow primary since I can only be acquainted with singular things.

Calvin Normore argues in a forthcoming article that William Ockham, in the early fourteenth century, invented the notion of singular thought.¹ The thesis is not that Ockham was first in the history of philosophy to think that humans can think about a singular object—he was most certainly not—but the point is instead that he was first to think that singular thought is primary and the foundation of more general thought. Ever since Aristotle, it had been the other way around, namely, that thinking is primarily universal and that we somehow think about singulars in terms of universals. Normore wants to reject this and pejoratively notes that philosophy has always had a preference for the universal.

Ockham's own innovative theory of mind and thought is motivated by his metaphysical stance and his negative criticism of the Aristotelian theory of thought. One can thus say that there are, at least, two distinct pictures of the mind or theories of thought in later medieval philosophy. In one picture, the traditional Aristotelian picture

1 See Normore (forthcoming).

epitomized by Aquinas, the mind is literally nothing before it thinks of something. In analogy with perception, the mind takes on the form of the object thought about, that is, thinking is having the form of some object in the mind. Thinking is also, as emphasized in this picture, in the first instance universal. In the second picture, which is Ockham's, thinking is constituted by a concept or notion inhering in or modifying the mind. Thinking, furthermore, is language-like, that is, a language of thought hypothesis usually accompanies this picture of the mind, and it also holds that thinking is, in the first instance, singular.

The theory Ockham developed was incredibly influential and became the foundation of a family of theories of thought that were dominant well into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and it can, in many ways, still be said to be the dominant theory of thought.² In Normore's article, he also claims that thinkers following in Ockham's footsteps radically misunderstood the notion invented by Ockham; Normore is primarily considering John Buridan. These two thinkers did not disagree on the notion that singular thought is somehow primary, but they instead disagreed on what singular thought is. Normore claims, further, that Buridan got it all wrong. In this article, I would like to investigate the relation between Ockham and Buridan further and explain why Buridan ends up with the view he defends. I furthermore would like to present a defense of Buridan's notion of singular thought.

2

Before I go on to outline Ockham's view of singular thought, I would like to give a short presentation of Aquinas' view since it will later help us understand Buridan's position better. In Aquinas' theory, the mind takes on the form of the object thought about. The theory goes back at least to Aristotle, and the idea is that the intelligible species, that is, the mental representation of the object of thought, represents an object because it has the same form as the object. The reason my thoughts are about the cup on the table is that the cup and my thought of the cup have the same form. The cup represented in my mind and the cup on the table are one and the same thing in two different kinds of existence. It is obvious that the cup does not exist in my mind in the same way as it does outside it—the mind does not become a cup by its thinking of a cup—although the form is the same.

This "conformality" account of mental representation is, for Aquinas, embedded in a much larger, causal theory of the reception of these forms into the mind or

2 For studies of the medieval part of this tradition, see Lagerlund (2003), Lagerlund (2004b), and Lagerlund (forthcoming a). For a study of the continuation of this tradition in early modern thought, see Lagerlund (forthcoming b). See also Fodor (2003) for an example of the importance of this view today.

intellectual soul, according to which forms are transmitted through the intervening medium between subject and object (the doctrine of the *species in medio* or “species in the medium”) and received in the external sense-organs and sense-faculty, which leads to the production of phantasms or sensible species and ultimately to the creation by the active intellect of a mental representation or intelligible species in the passive intellect.³

One consequence of this theory of thought is that thinking, in the first instance, will always be universal because it involves abstraction from the particularizing, material conditions of the object of thought. But this creates some serious metaphysical problems for Aquinas. What is the individuating principle here? Why is my thought about the cup on the table a thought about the cup on the table and not about cups in general? The form in my mind is general—a cup-form—and, since the intellect or mind according to Aquinas is immaterial, matter cannot serve as its individuating principle. My thinking about the individual cup on the table is somehow mediated through the universal cup-form representing it. Aquinas never presents a satisfying answer to the question how individual things can be objects of thought.

His view is that we can think, in a wide sense of the term, about a singular thing, but we can never, so to say, “intellect” a singular. The singular is thought about through a complicated process involving both sensation and intellection. In *Summa theologiae* I, q. 84, a. 7, co., he writes:

And it is therefore necessary, in order for the intellect to actually understand its proper object, that it turns towards phantasms, to examine a universal nature existing in a particular.⁴

The process of “turning towards phantasms” seems to be a combination of thinking something general and applying it to whatever particular sensation it is about. An example of the process he is expressing would be the following case: I look at the cup on the table and think “cup.” In this process, there is a particular or demonstrative element involved, namely the sensation, which limits the general concept, “cup,” to a particular cup. The process can thus be expressed by the complex term “this cup,” but in this case the “this” reflects an act of attention rather than a thought.⁵

However one explicates the process Aquinas wants to capture by the phrase “turning towards phantasms,” one never really gets down to a process which involves proper

3 See Tachau (1988), Pasnau (1997), and Lagerlund (2004c).

4 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 84, a. 7, co.: “Et ideo necesse est ad hoc quod intellectus actu intelligat suum obiectum proprium, quod convertat se ad phantasmata, ut speculetur naturam universalem in particulari existentem.”

5 See the account given in Pasnau (2002) 284–295.

singular concepts. It is, it seems to me, fair to say that, properly speaking, singular thought does not exist in the Aristotelian or Thomistic theory of thought.

3

In its mature form, Ockham's theory of thought involves a language of thought hypothesis, that is, thought is language-like and combinations of signs. These signs, which the language is built upon, are concepts or notions, that is, mental particulars that Ockham also refers to as mental acts. These signs are of two kinds, namely either categorematic or syncategorematic. Categorematic signs have signification of their own and, in the context of a sentence, they have supposition. The syncategorematic signs are typically logical signs like "all," "some," "not," "is," etc. and they do not signify anything unless they are combined with categorematic signs.

Thinking something singular in this theory simply means having a singular concept or notion in mind. To explain in more detail what this implies, two questions need to be addressed: How are these singular concepts acquired, and how do they manage to latch onto the world when we think of some singular thing? For Ockham, these questions are naturally connected, and the answer to the former will yield an answer to the latter.

The first question is answered by Ockham's theory of cognition. His most extensive discussion of the theory of cognition is in the prologue to the *Ordinatio*,⁶ but he deals with it in several other places in his works as well. He begins this section of the *Ordinatio* by drawing a distinction between acts of apprehension and acts of judgment. Acts of apprehension are divided into simple and complex acts, while acts of judgment are always complex. They are also always intellectual, while acts of apprehension can be either sensitive or intellectual. The acts of apprehension are further divided into intuitive and abstractive acts.⁷

According to Ockham, there are two souls in each human, and hence he thinks that there are two distinct levels of apprehension, one sensitive and one intellective.⁸ As a consequence, there are two intuitive acts of cognition and two abstractive. The external object perceived acts by efficient causation on the senses to produce an intuitive cognition in the sensitive soul,⁹ and then the very same intuitive cognition acts by

6 See William Ockham, *Ordinatio* I, prol., q. 1, a. 1, OTh I, 16–47.

7 Ockham's account of intuitive and abstractive cognition is very much in dispute and I will here present my view of his theory of cognition. See Stump (1999) and Karger (1999) for two other different accounts of Ockham's theory. See also Tachau (1988) 123–129 and Panaccio (2004) 5–8.

8 See Lagerlund (2004a) for a discussion of Ockham's theory of the nature of the soul.

9 See Ockham, *Reportatio* II, q. 13, OTh V, 276.

efficient causation on the intellective soul and causes an intuitive cognition in the intellect.¹⁰ These two intuitive cognitions are about the very same thing, namely, the individual object acting on the senses.

There is no need for any intermediary here, argues Ockham. The object itself is sufficient to cause, at a distance, the act of apprehension. “I say that a thing itself is seen or apprehended immediately, without any intermediary between itself and the act.”¹¹ It need not be the case that a mover and what is moved are in contact with each other, but “something can act at a great distance, with nothing acting in between.”¹² Having gotten rid of species, he is left with the mysterious notion of action at a distance. To defend himself, he gives three examples of actions at distance in addition to cognition, namely, the rays of the sun, pinhole images, and magnets.¹³

The terminology of intuitive and abstractive cognition (*notitia*) is not new with Ockham; it was previously used by Scotus.¹⁴ Ockham’s use of these terms, however, is new. The definition he gives in the *Reportatio* is: “An intuitive [cognition] is [a cognition] through which a thing is cognized as existing when it exists or as not existing when it does not.”¹⁵ He then defines an abstractive cognition in relation to the intuitive as a cognition by virtue of which one cannot know whether a thing is or is not. It, as he puts it, “abstracts from existence and non-existence,” and is, in that sense, the opposite of intuitive cognition by which we know evidently that the thing cognized exists.¹⁶ Abstractive cognition is often explained as the cognition one has of a thing when one imagines or remembers it. When I imagine or remember something, it certainly need not be present before me and, hence, existence does not play a direct role—although I, of course, need to have perceived it, that is, I need to have had an intuitive cognition of it in order to be able to remember it, but perhaps not in order to imagine it. As Ockham explains in his *Quodlibetal Questions*, an intuitive cognition is thus always prior to an abstractive cognition:

10 See *Reportatio* III, q. 2, OTh VI, 65.

11 See *Ordinatio* I, d. 27, q. 3, OTh IV, 241, and *Reportatio* III, q. 3, OTh VI, 121.

12 *Reportatio* III, q. 2, OTh VI, 60: “... aliquid potest agere in extremum distans, nihil agendo in medio.”

13 Ockham’s three examples have been much discussed both in his own time and by contemporary scholars. See Goddu (1984).

14 See Pasnau (2003) for a discussion of Scotus’ use of this terminology.

15 *Reportatio* II, q. 12–13, OTh V, 256: “Intuitiva est illa mediante qua cognoscitur res esse quando est, et non esse quando non est.”

16 *Ordinatio* I, prol., q. 1, a. 1, OTh I, 32: “Notitia autem abstractiva est illa virtute cuius de re contingente non potest sciri evidenter utrum sit vel non sit. Et per istum modum notitia abstractiva abstrahit ab existentia et non existentia, quia nec per ipsam potest evidenter sciri de re existente quod existit, nec de non existente quod non existit, per oppositum ad notitiam intuitivam. Similiter, per notitiam abstractivam nulla veritas contingens, maxime de praesenti, potest evidenter cognosci.”

I claim that a cognition that is simple, proper to a singular, and first by the sort of primacy in question is an intuitive cognition. Now it is evident that this sort of cognition is first, since an abstractive cognition of a singular presupposes an intuitive cognition with respect to the same object, and not vice versa. Moreover, it is evident that an intuitive cognition is proper to the singular, since it is immediately caused by the singular thing (or fitted [*nata*] to be caused by it), and it is not fitted to be caused by any other singular thing, even one of the same species.¹⁷

In this passage, he not only explains that an intuitive cognition is primary, but also that it is simple, proper and singular. Hence, the five basic properties of any intuitive cognition seem to be: primacy, properness, simplicity, singularity and existence. Let us leave primacy and existence for now and have a look at the other properties. What does it mean that an intuitive cognition is proper? As he explains it in the quotation above, it means that it is caused by a singular object, and it is proper because, whatever object caused the cognition, no other object could have caused it. It is important to remember that Ockham's nominalism states that whatever exists is singular or individual, and it is obviously only these things that can cause an intuitive cognition. (Perhaps only God is an exception to this.)

It is also important to remember his criticism of the species theory, namely his dismissal of the notion of similarity to account for the intentional property of a cognition.¹⁸ If similarity is evoked here, then we are going to claim that what underlies the "being about" -relation is a property that is intrinsically general, and hence we will violate the singularity criterion of cognition. He states this very clearly himself:

[t]hat it does not seem that an intuitive cognition is a proper cognition, since any given intuitive cognition is equally a likeness of the one singular thing and of another exactly similar thing, and it equally represents both the one and the other. Therefore, it does not seem to be more a cognition of the one than a cognition of the other.¹⁹

He then replies:

I reply that an intuitive cognition is a proper cognition of a singular thing not because of its greater likeness to the one thing than to the other, but because it

17 See Ockham, *Quodlibet* I, q. 13, OTh IX, 73; transl. Freddoso & Kelley, 65. The translation is slightly modified. See also Normore (forthcoming) for the same modification.

18 See Panaccio (2004) 27–30 for a discussion of Ockham's critique of the species theory.

19 See *Quodlibet* I, q. 13, OTh IX, 74; transl., 65.

is naturally caused by the one thing and not by the other, and it is not able to be caused by the other.²⁰

To preempt an obvious objection he continues:

You might object that it can be caused by God [acting] alone. This is true, but such a perception (*visio*) is always fitted (*nata*) to be caused by the one created object and not by the other; and if it is caused naturally, then it is caused by the one and not by the other, and is not able to be caused by the other. Hence, it is not because of a likeness that an intuitive cognition, rather than a first abstractive cognition, is called a proper cognition of a singular thing. Rather, it is only because of causality; nor can any other reason be given.²¹

In a sense, one can say that all the other properties of an intuitive cognition derive from the property of properness. My cognition of the cup on my table is proper by being caused by the cup, and it is hence singular because it is of that individual cup. It is also simple because, whatever the end result is, it will only be another individual thing in the intellectual soul, which stands in a unique causal relation to that cup. The primacy is also an obvious consequence of the properness of an intuitive cognition.

The property of an intuitive cognition I have called “existence” is often explained in the following way, namely, that such a cognition is apt by nature to cause the intellect to judge evidently that a thing exists, if it does, and that a thing does not exist, if it does not.²² If an intuitive cognition is proper in the sense outlined above, it follows from this that the object it is of exists, if I have an intuitive cognition of it. If the cognition causes the judgment “The cup exists,” then it is obviously based on the nature of an intuitive cognition that our intellects will assent evidently to this judgment. But what happens to the intentionality of the intuitive cognition if it is caused by God and not by the only object that can cause it naturally?

The thought experiment Ockham discusses in the *Ordinatio* is the following: Assume that there is an intuitive cognition of a star and then assume further that God preserves the cognition while destroying the star.²³ Is the cognition still of the star? “No,” says Ockham, but almost all of his contemporaries said “yes.”²⁴ If it is of the star, then God can perhaps deceive us, and hence much of the discussion after Ockham was,

20 See *ibid.*, OTh IX, 76; transl., 66.

21 See *ibid.*

22 See Karger (1999) for a careful discussion of this property of the intuitive cognition.

23 See *Ordinatio* I, prol., q. 1, a. 1, OTh I, 38–39.

24 They all agreed, however, that the cognition does not turn into a cognition about God. See *Quodlibet* VI, q. 6, OTh IX, 605–606, transl. 506–507, for Ockham’s argument.

in fact, about epistemological skepticism.²⁵ Ockham had no such skeptical tendencies, however, and he claimed that, in the example under discussion, the intuitive cognition would cause us to judge evidently that the star did not exist.²⁶ Is such cognition possible? It sounds a bit strange, one must admit, but as some have pointed out it shows that Ockham does not, with an intuitive cognition, mean a cognition that simply presents an object as present.²⁷ He is instead stressing the properness property of the intuitive cognition.

In *Quodlibet* VI, Ockham discusses the question: “Can there be an intuitive cognition of an object that does not exist?” From the definition of an intuitive cognition, it is clear that one cannot have such cognition of a thing if that thing does not exist. If there is no cause of the cognition, there cannot be a cognition. As he explains, anything else implies a contradiction. He writes:

To the main argument I reply that it is a contradiction that a vision should exist and yet that the thing that is seen should neither exist nor be able to exist in actuality. Thus, it is a contradiction that a chimera should be seen intuitively. However, it is not a contradiction that that which is seen should be nothing actual outside its cause, as long as it is able to exist in actuality or at one time did exist in reality. And this is how it is in the case under discussion. Hence, from eternity God saw all the things that were able to be created, and yet at that time they were nothing.²⁸

But, as he also explains in this passage, whatever causes the cognition need not itself actually exist outside its cause given that it can exist outside its cause. For something to actually exist, it needs to exist outside its cause, but it suffices for it to be able to cause an intuitive cognition that it exists in its cause. This is what is happening in the case of the star that has been annihilated by God. Even though an intuitive cognition in fact causes us to assert that its object exists or not, this is not the most important fact about an intuitive cognition. To put it differently, existence is not an essential property of an intuitive cognition. This quotation shows that it is the properness property that is *the* essential property of these kinds of cognitions.

As we have seen, to say that an intuitive cognition is proper is to say that it has a cause and that the cause and the cognition are always co-extensive; no other cause could have produced this cognition. Furthermore, as I have tried to show, this has certain implications, namely, that such a cognition causes us to know if the object cognized

25 See Karger (2004).

26 See *Ordinatio* I, prol., q. 1, a. 1, OTh I, 31. See also Adams (1987) 505.

27 See Normore (forthcoming).

28 *Quodlibet* VI, q. 6, OTh IX, 606–607; transl., 507–508.

exists or not, that it is singular, simple and also prior to all other cognitions. Let me now explore abstractive cognitions in relation to what I have said about intuitive cognitions.

An abstractive cognition, as seen above, is a cognition that does not cause us to assert that the object exists, if it does, and not exist, if it does not. It has abstracted away from existence, Ockham says, but we should perhaps not take this too literally since an abstractive cognition will always be dependent on a previous intuitive cognition. In the prologue to the *Ordinatio*, he writes:

Every naturally acquired abstractive cognition of a thing presupposes an intuitive cognition of the same thing. The reason for this is that no intellect can naturally acquire a cognition of a thing unless by means of that thing acting as a partial efficient cause. But every cognition for which the coexistence of the thing is necessary is an intuitive cognition. Therefore, the first cognition of a thing is intuitive. Nevertheless, God can cause an abstractive cognition both of deity and of other thing without any previous intuitive cognition.²⁹

It would be more proper to say that it abstracts away from present existence, that is, I cannot assert evidently that the object of my abstractive cognition exists now, but if it is caused naturally it will have existed and I will have had an intuitive cognition of it.

What about the other properties of an intuitive cognition? Do they hold for abstractive cognition? It is clear from the previous passage that primacy does not hold. If the only things that exist are individuals, is then abstracting from existence the same thing as abstracting from individuality? Yes, I think it is, but we are not completely abstracting from existence, as just pointed out. I therefore think that an abstractive cognition is still individual. It seems to me that it would be internally consistent for Ockham to claim at least that some abstractive cognitions are individual or singular, but in the *Quodlibetal Questions*, he instead claims that a “simple abstractive cognition is not a cognition proper to a singular but is sometimes, indeed always, a common cognition.”³⁰ The reason he claims this is related to the properness property.

An abstractive cognition is certainly caused. But the question is: by what? Obviously, its cause cannot be (at least directly) an external object. As mentioned before, the most obvious examples of abstractive cognitions are recollections and imaginations. Memories and imaginations are habits or dispositions, according to Ockham, and hence caused by a previous act of intuitive cognition.³¹ These habits or dispositions are therefore the causes of our abstractive cognitions. My thought of the cup that was previously on my table is an abstractive cognition of the cup caused by the disposition

29 *Ordinatio* I, prol., q. 1, a. 6, OTh I, 72.

30 *Quodlibet* I, q. 13, OTh IX, 74; transl., 65.

31 *Reportatio* II, q. 13, OTh V, 271–272, and *ibid.* III, q. 3, OTh VI, 116–117.

in my mind, which in turn was caused by my previous intuitive cognition of the cup. We must then draw a distinction between external causes and internal causes of our cognitions. External causes of our cognitions cause intuitive cognitions, while the internal causes cause abstractive cognitions.³² Only external causes are proper causes, however, and only such causes imply the existence property since it is the external causes that relate things in the world to things in the mind. An internal cause will never be proper and will hence only generate a similarity of the object it is of. Ockham explains that:

no simple abstractive cognition is more a likeness of one singular thing than of another exactly like it; nor is it caused by, or fitted by nature to be caused by, [just one] thing. Therefore, no such cognition is proper to a singular thing; rather, each such cognition is universal.³³

No likeness can be proper, only general, and singularity and existence are tied to properness.

The end products of both intuitive and abstractive cognitions are concepts, or mental terms. Given the previous discussion, it is clear that concepts caused by an intuitive cognition will be singular concepts, and concepts caused by an abstractive cognition will be general. If we now return to the questions I posed in the beginning, namely, how are these singular concepts acquired and how do they manage to latch onto the world when I think of some singular thing? They are caused by an intuitive cognition, which is proper to the object causing it, that is, no other object can cause it (leaving God aside). Thinking about the cup on my table means having the very concept in mind that was caused by the cup on my table. The concept is a sign of the cup. The thought of the cup latches onto the world by this relation, which uniquely determines the co-variation of my thought and the cup in the external world.

4

Although John Buridan belongs to the same philosophical tradition as Ockham and adheres to the same general model of thought, he differs quite radically from Ockham on the specific details of this theory.³⁴ One of the most obvious differences is Buridan's

32 The sensory intuitive cognition causes the intellectual intuitive cognition in Ockham's view of cognition, and although it seems like an internal cause, since it is something happening within me (although it is a causal relation between my two souls), I am here calling it an external causal relation. An internal cause is, in this terminology, a causal relation inside a soul or between a habit and an act (or *fictum*).

33 *Quodlibet* I, q. 13, OTh IX, 74; transl., 65.

34 He differs so much that I have previously written about a Buridanian language of thought tradition. See Lagerlund (2004b).

acceptance of the species theory of sensation. He does not seem bothered by Ockham's criticism of the theory and develops it in quite some detail in his *De anima* commentaries.³⁵ I will, however, not discuss the sensible species here and instead try to put his treatment of singular thought in context by saying something about intellection in general and the role of the intelligible species.³⁶

Sense information from the external senses is compiled in the soul into a representation or likeness of the external world. In question 15 of Book III of the third redaction of the *De anima* commentary, Buridan explains that:

it was stated in Book II that actual sensations are received subjectively in the soul as well as in the body, and derived from the potentiality of both. It seems to me that the intellect is sufficiently actual by the actual cognition or apprehension, so that with it, it can form an actual intellection in itself that is not already received in the body (as derived from its potentiality), but in the intellect alone. It is, therefore, apparent that the phantasm, i.e., the actual apprehension, is related to the intellection in the same way that the species caused by an object in the organ of sense was said to be related to the sensation.³⁷

As is obvious from the passage, there is a double aspect of the phantasm, according to Buridan, and hence there is a side to sensation corresponding to changes in the internal bodily organ and another corresponding to the subjective reception of sensation in the soul.³⁸ It is this phantasm or representation, the actual apprehension, which is the intelligible species. The intelligible species is, however, not always a product of direct sense perception, for it may be caused through the recollection of memory or through pure imagination, but they, on the other hand, always presuppose some previous sense experience. This is the way Buridan wants to explain the Aristotelian view that, without a phantasm, no thinking will occur.

35 See, e.g., John Buridan, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima* (Third Redaction), Book II.

36 See Sobol (2001) for a discussion of sensation in Buridan.

37 Buridan, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima* (Third Redaction), III, q. 15, 168–169: “Cum enim dictum fuit in secundo libro quod actuales sensationes recipiuntur subiective tam in anima quam in corpore, et de utriusque potentia educuntur, videtur mihi quod per illam actualem cognitionem seu apprehensionem, intellectus sit sufficienter in actu, ut ipse cum illa posset actualem intellectionem formare in se quae iam non recipiatur in corpore (tanquameducta de eius potentia), sed in intellectu solum. Unde sic apparet quod illud phantasma, id est illa actualis apprehensio, se habet proportionaliter ad intellectionem sicut species causata ab obiecto in organo sensus dicebatur se habere ad sensationem.”

38 See Lagerlund (2004a) for an explication of Buridan's dualism. See also Zupko (2003), ch. 11, for a slightly different interpretation.

Although Buridan uses the same terminology to explain sensation as Aquinas does, he puts it to quite a different use. For example, the intelligible species is identified with the phantasm. In a *De anima* commentary that has been claimed to be an earlier version of Buridan's *De anima*, it is explained in the following way:

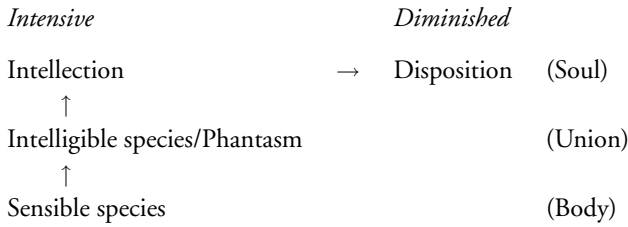
First of all, it must be known that *species, idolum, imago, similitudo* are the same; and therefore it must be assumed that the intelligible species is a certain quality representative in a natural way of its object, in the same way as an image, which is commonly said to be in the mirror, is representative of a thing exposed to the mirror. In the very same way: the intelligible species is a certain image representative of a thing which is exposed to the intellect.³⁹

The first thing to note about this quotation is, of course, the different terms all used to refer to the representation or the intelligible species. It is, however, immediately obvious that the mirror metaphor he uses to illustrate his point does not fully apply to the intelligible species, since it is supposed to compile information from all the five senses into one full representation or likeness of the external world. This will hence be a very rich "picture," which is tantamount to my apprehension of my surrounding. It is the intelligible species that my intellect has to work with—from which so-called first intellections and acts of the soul are produced, which do not have any corresponding acts in the body, that is, they are purely intellectual acts or thoughts.

From the intelligible species, the intellect forms intellections, acts of understanding or thoughts. These in turn affect the intellectual soul by causing so-called intellectual dispositions. The dispositions differ from the intellections only in intensity. It is the intellections that are the concepts by which we think or rather they are our thoughts, which combine into mental sentences. Every time we think, we need an intelligible species or a representation in the soul, but as the concept or thought diminishes in intensity it turns into a disposition.⁴⁰ To explain this process further, consider the following picture:

39 Pseudo-John Buridan, *Expositio et quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima*, III, q. 10, 457: "Quantum ad primum sciendum est quod idem est species, idolum, imago, similitudo; et ergo imaginandum est quod species intelligibilis est quaedam qualitas naturaliter repraesentativa ipsius obiecti, recte sicut imago, quae vulgariter dicitur esse in speculo, est repraesentativa rei obiectae speculo; sed sic directe in proposito: species intelligibilis est quaedam imago repraesentativa rei quae obicitur intellectui."

40 See Buridan, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima*, III, q. 15, 163.



Buridan's strong substance dualism of body and soul is, of course, a feature that underlines this picture. It is appropriate to have this picture in mind before moving on and considering the problems of singular thought associated with it.

In question 8 of Book III, Buridan explains that the question of our cognizing universals and singulars is really a question of whether we understand according to a universal or singular concept.⁴¹ He furthermore stresses that we first understand through a singular concept and then abstract universal concepts from this singular concept in second order intellections. However, since the external world is represented to us as likenesses of the things we perceive, why does the generality of a likeness not exclude singular cognition?⁴² To explain this, Buridan, immediately after having posed the question writes:

To resolve these doubts, we are obliged to see from *Metaphysics* VII in what way a thing is perceived singularly, namely, because it is necessary to perceive it in the way something exists in the prospect (*in prospectu*) of the cognizer. ... Therefore, because exterior [sense] cognizes a sensible in the way something exists in its prospect in accordance with a certain location, even if sometimes it judges falsely about the place due to the reflection of the species, it cognizes it singularly or clearly, namely, as this or that. Therefore, even though exterior sense cognizes Socrates, or whiteness, or white, nevertheless this is not done without the species representing it confusedly together with the substance, the whiteness, the magnitude, and the location, in accordance with what appears in the prospect of the cognizer. And this sense cannot sort out this confusion, namely, it cannot

41 Buridan, *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima*, III, q. 8, 64: "Et quia praeter animam nostram, scilicet extra, non est equus universalis distinctus ab equo singulari vel equis singularibus, nec lapis universalis praeter lapides singulares, et sic de aliis (prout supponimus ex septimo *Metaphysicae*), ideo dicta quaestio in propriis verbis formanda est: utrum easdem res vel eandem rem intellectus prius intelligat universaliter, id est, secundum conceptum communem, quam singulariter, id est secundum conceptum singularem, vel e converso."

42 Buridan is well aware of this difficulty. He even formulates the question himself. He writes (*ibid.*, 75): "Secunda dubitatio est cum sensus etiam cognoscat res per suas similitudines, quare non cognoscat eas universaliter?"

abstract the species of the substance, the whiteness, the magnitude, and the location from each other; therefore, it cannot perceive the whiteness, or the substance, or the white unless in the way something exists in its prospect. Therefore, it can only cognize the aforesaid things singularly.⁴³

As mentioned, the intelligible species gives a rich presentation of the external world, and as such, it is confused both in the manner of being put together by lots of things and lots of aspects, or as he says, with magnitude, location, color, substance, etc., and confused in the sense that we cannot exactly tell what we are perceiving, that is, it is confusing. We cannot tell what things are unless we focus in on something in the world, that is, attend to some thing by putting it in our prospect or in view.⁴⁴ Once we have something in our prospect, it immediately, necessarily, forces a concept on us.

Having pointed this out, he goes on to explicate what these concepts we first acquire are like. He writes that:

the singular is considered sensible in two ways, as was discussed: one, which is usually called vague, as in “this man” and “this man approaching,” which must be called singular absolutely and strictly (nevertheless, it is only called vague conventionally, because a similar utterance fits several things depending upon the different ways of picking it out), and another, which is usually called determinate, as in “Socrates” or “Plato,” in accordance with that described by the collection of properties determined in this way to one referent, which as a matter of fact is not received as such in another determinate referent, as Porphyry correctly states.

43 *Ibid.*, 76: “Ad solvendum illas dubitationes, debemus ex septimo Metaphysicae videre modum percipiendi rem singulariter: scilicet quia oportet eam percipere per modum existentis in prospectu cognoscentis. . . . Sensus ergo exterior quia cognoscit sensibile per modum existentis in prospectu suo secundum certum situm, licet aliquando false iudicat de situ propter reflexiones speciorum, ideo cognoscit ipsum singulariter vel consignate, scilicet quod hoc vel illud. Quamvis ergo sensus exterior cognoscat Sortem vel albedinem vel album, tamen hoc non est nisi secundum speciem confuse repraesentatem cum substantia et albedine et magnitudine et situ secundum quem apparet in prospectu cognoscentis. Et ille sensus non potest distinguere illam confusionem: scilicet non potest abstrahere species substantiae et albedinis et magnitudinis et situs ab invicem, ideo non potest percipere albedinem vel substantiam vel album nisi per modum existentis in prospectu eius. Ideo non potest cognoscere praedicta nisi singulariter.”

44 The main reason for introducing the notion of attention in a species theory of perception and conceptualization is that it answers one of the main objections against such so-called intromission theories of perception. Alkindi had argued that if sight occurs through an impression on the eye by a form then everything within the visual field would be seen simultaneously. The result would be that we would not be able to tell what we are looking at. See Lindberg (1978) for a discussion of Alkindi’s argument.

Then, it should be realized that it is not necessary to cognize a thing singularly before cognizing it universally as far as the determinate singular is concerned, but the vague singular, it is difficult to cognize singularly. If I first judge that Socrates approaching from a distance is a body and then that it is an animal and that it is an animal before it is a human being, and that it is a human being before it is Socrates, and so on. I will in the end apprehend him according to the concept from which the name “Socrates” is taken. But first by sense, and then by intellection, we judge the animal or the man confusedly with location, rather than universally, by abstracting the animal or the human from the representation of a location. And then it must be noted that each and every universal has its vague singular corresponding to it, as in “body”/“this body,” “animal”/“this animal,” “human being”/“this human being.” Now in sense, there is first a vague individual of what is more universal before there is a vague individual of what is less universal, for sense judges the body before the animal. Therefore, in abstracting, the intellect judges what is more universal before what is less universal, for instance, the body before the animal.⁴⁵

Add to this the following quotation:

From the things that have been said, it appears obvious what must be replied to the question, for it must be said that we understand singularly before we

45 *Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima*, III, q. 8, 80–81: “Et hoc provenit ex parte sensus, quoniam duplex ponitur singulare sensibile, ut tactum fuit: unum quod solet vocari vagum, ut ‘hic homo’ vel ‘hic veniens’, quod vocari debet singulare simpliciter et propria (solum tamen, vocatur ad placitum vagum, quia similis vox convenit pluribus secundum diversas demonstrationes), aliud quod solet vocari determinatum, ut ‘Sortes’ vel ‘Plato’, secundum quod describitur per collectionem proprietatum determinatum sic ad unum suppositum, quod defacto non recipitur talis in alio supposito determinato, ut bene dicit Porphyrius.

Modo ergo considerandum est quod non oportet prius rem cognoscere singulariter quam universaliter quantum ad singularem determinatum, sed quantum ad singularem vagum, immo difficile est cognoscere singulariter. Si enim Sortes veniens a longe, prius iudicabo quod est corpus quamque est animal, et prius quod est animal quamque est homo, et prius quod est homo quamque est Sortes, et sic, ultimo apprehendam eum secundum conceptum a quo sumitur hoc nomen ‘Sortis’. Sed prius per sensum, et consequenter per intellectionem, iudicamus hoc animal vel hunc hominem confuse cum situ, quam universaliter, animalem vel hominem abstrahendo a representatione situs. Et tunc notandum est quod quodlibet universale habet suum singulare vagum sibi correspondens, ut ‘corpus’/‘hoc corpus’, ‘animal’/‘hoc animal’, ‘homo’/‘hoc homo’. Modo apud sensum, prius est individuum vagum magis universalis quam individuum vagum minus universalis, nam sensus prius iudicat hoc corpus quam hoc animal. Ideo in abstrahendo, intellectus prius iudicat magis universale quam minus universale, ut corpus prius quam animal.”

understand universally, because a representation confused with size, place and other things is produced in the intellect before the intellect can sort out and abstract from the confusion.⁴⁶

It is by putting things in our prospect, that is, by focusing our attention on them, that we intellect singularly whatever is represented by the intelligible species. The concept or act of understanding produced first by this process is singular, but it is also vague. A vague concept is singular because it is about only one thing, but it is not determined what thing that is other than in the specific perception I am now having. Examples of such concepts are “this animal,” “this cup,” etc. From these concepts, we can sort out more determinate singular concepts and also abstract universal concepts.⁴⁷

In Buridan’s theory, then, we always cognize or conceive something first as singular, but this means that we first conceive it as this or that, that is, we conceive it as something. This implies that our concepts are always from the beginning loaded with content and a proper singular is something that picks out an object in all circumstances in which it is conceived. Such a concept is not vague—it certainly only applies to one thing—but it is also a very complex concept. If it was not complex, it could not fulfill its task of being singular.

To sum up so far, then, it seems appropriate to ask what Buridan’s answer to the two questions I posed in relation to Ockham will be. The first question was: How are singular concepts acquired? The answer is, of course, the process of putting something in prospect or view. The second question was: How do these concepts latch onto the world? The answer to this question is not as straightforward. It will, in fact, be quite complicated and will have to do with the complexity of the concepts. When I am thinking about Socrates, the concept I am having in my mind will latch onto Socrates by the properties of Socrates contained or described by my concept of him. It is due to the complexity of the concept that it picks out or latches onto Socrates.

5

Before I start to compare Buridan’s account of singular thought with Ockham’s, I would like to compare Buridan’s account with Aquinas’, outlined in the beginning of this paper. On the surface, Aquinas and Buridan might look very similar. They both

46 *Ibid.*, 80: “Ex illis dictis, apparet manifeste quod sit respondendum ad quaestionem, dicendum est enim quod prius intelligimus singulariter quam universaliter, quia prius fit in intellectu representatio confusa cum magnitudine et situ et aliis, quam intellectus posset distinguere et abstrahere illam confusionem.”

47 See Lagerlund (2004b) and Lagerlund (forthcoming a).

think that the notion of attention is involved in the process of thinking something singularly, and also that singular thought is paradigmatically complex in the sense that it involves a general and a demonstrative element, captured by phrases like “this animal” or “this cup.”

If one looks carefully, however, Aquinas and Buridan differ radically, particularly since Buridan thinks singular thought is primary and universal thought secondary while, for Aquinas, it is the other way around. The vague concepts are, furthermore, not constructed out of general ones and acts of attention captured by the demonstrative “this.” The richness of the representation or the intelligible species is simply transferred into a concept by the process of putting something in prospect, but the act of understanding generated is not so to say everything-at-once as in the intelligible species; it is now about one thing, which is captured by, for example, the phrase “this cup.” It is a rich concept, but still a singular one. The similarity between Buridan and Aquinas does not stretch further than that they both accept some version of the species-theory of perception.

6

It is now apparent that, while Ockham’s and Buridan’s accounts of singular thought start out from the same idea, that is, that thinking something singularly is having a singular concept in mind, they disagree fundamentally on what a singular concept looks like and foremost on how it manages to latch onto the world. In Ockham’s account, a singular concept is singular because its cause was proper and proper causes are necessarily tied to one object, but in Buridan’s account, a singular concept is singular because of its complexity. It has a descriptive content that enables it to narrow down its signification to only one thing.

In the work mentioned above, Normore argues that Ockham gives an account of singular thought while Buridan mistakenly thinks his own account is an account of singular thought. In fact, Buridan is not giving an account of singular thought at all, argues Normore. Normore seems to think that singular thoughts also need to be simple. My thought of Socrates is a thought of one singular thing, and since the thought does not represent Socrates *as* something, it is simply a thought about Socrates. In another article, Normore expresses his idea in the following way:

There seems to be a tension between a view that would expand the direct reference picture centered on demonstratives, proper names, and kind terms to perception and a view that insists that perceptual states specify objects *as*. A proper name cannot *misrepresent* that of which it is a proper name. It cannot misrepresent it because it does not represent it as this rather than as that. It doesn’t represent it as this rather than as that because its semantic function is

wholly exhausted in picking out its referent. To misrepresent its referent it would have to have some further content.⁴⁸

Ockham's singular concepts are simple in the way Normore here expresses it and he contrasts it to a view that I think is exactly Buridan's, namely, that singular concepts represent things *as* this or that.

The quality of simplicity that singular concepts have, according to Ockham, can be expressed, again using terminology from Normore, by saying that they are *bare*, that is, their semantic function is wholly exhausted by their picking out their referent. Ockham is very radical, and it seems to me he would hold that all concepts generated by intuitive cognitions are bare in this sense. Not even S. Kripke, whose views come close to Ockham's, is this radical. In *Naming and Necessity*, he seems to think that there is an *a priori* connection between kind terms like "pain" and its "feel." Hence, all kind terms are not bare or what Ockham calls simple and proper, that is, we can know some things about them *a priori*.

This reveals a major problem, which I think is a serious problem for externalists like Ockham or Kripke, namely, that perceptions seem not to be bare in the sense that they claim them to be. This kind of causal externalism connects us with objects in the world through our concepts, but these concepts are conceptually independent of connections among objects in the world. It seems to me and, I think, many critics of a strong kind of externalism, that we always perceive things as something. I perceive the thing approaching as a being, then, as it gets closer, as a human, and then finally as Socrates. Perceptions are not bare like Ockham's cognitions of singulars are. Furthermore, as Normore points out and seems to think is a virtue of an account like Ockham's, a bare concept cannot misrepresent an object since it does not represent something as this or that. To be able to misrepresent, it needs to have some further content—it needs to be complex. It seems to me that one must leave room for concepts, even singular concepts, to be able to misrepresent.

Buridan's theory captures a very strong intuition, at least present in me, namely, that concepts of singulars like "Socrates" involve some discriminative knowledge. He also makes clear the intuition that so-called vague concepts, which do not involve discriminative knowledge, are always prior. This natural way of looking at concept acquisition from an empiricist standpoint is captured well by B. Russell in *The Analysis of Mind*. He writes that (please, excuse his nowadays politically incorrect example):

it is necessary, however, to distinguish between the vague and the general. ... The question whether this [vague] image takes us to the general or not depends, I

48 See Normore (2003) 4.

think, upon the question whether, in addition to the generalized image, we have also particular images of some of the instances out of which it is compounded. Suppose, for example, that on a number of occasions you had seen one negro, and that you did not know whether this one was the same or different on the different occasions. Suppose that in the end you had an abstract memory-image of the different occasions, but no memory-image of any one of the single appearances. In that case your image would be vague. If, on the other hand, you have, in addition to the generalized image, particular images of the several appearances, sufficiently clear to be recognized as different, and as instances of the generalized picture to be adequate to any one particular appearance, and you will be able to make it function as a general idea rather than as a vague idea. If this view is correct, no new general content needs to be added to the generalized image. What needs to be added is particular images compared and contrasted with the generalized image.⁴⁹

In the context of distinguishing between vague, particular and general ideas, Russell is here expressing what G. Evans has called Russell's Principle.⁵⁰ The principle can, in this context, be used to give a minimal requirement for singular concepts, namely that such concepts need to involve what Evans calls discriminative knowledge. For me to have a singular concept of Socrates, I need to be able to distinguish him from other things. I only have a proper singular concept if I, by having it in mind, manage to latch onto the world with it and pick out the right thing, and I can only do this if I can discriminate this from that—Socrates from Plato or, better, Socrates from his twin brother.

To substantiate this view, I would like to pick up a quotation from Nicholas Oresme's *De anima* commentary. He is doctrinally very close to Buridan, as I have argued elsewhere.⁵¹ He writes the following about vague concepts:

The fourth conclusion is that every concept in the second sense [that is, a vague concept] is said to be universal in one sense and singular in another. It is singular in that it is conceived with some singular circumstance. It is universal in that through such a concept another thing would be represented, if it were entirely similar in its sensible accidental qualities, as would be the case with two eggs.

49 See Russell (1921) 220–221.

50 See Evans (1982) 89–120. The principle as expressed by Russell himself in *The Problems of Philosophy* says that a subject cannot make a judgment about something unless he knows which object his judgment is about. Evans spends most of his discussion of the principle trying to spell out exactly what this means.

51 See Lagerlund (2004b) and Lagerlund (forthcoming a).

And [even] if it were but slightly different, then the sense would [still] not know that it is not cognizing the same thing.⁵²

Oresme here uses an example of two eggs that cannot be told apart by sensation to illustrate what it means to have a vague concept of something. It is only when my concepts get complex enough that they start to involve discriminatory knowledge that they are proper singular concepts. Evans uses a similar example of two steel balls in his discussion of Russell's Principle.⁵³ By exploiting the example and varying the circumstances in which one is aware of them, he shows that we constantly search for discriminative facts about things in our perception of them. It is only when we have found these facts that we are truly in a position to say that we know the object, or have a singular concept of it. Such concepts will always be complex; otherwise they would not be discriminatory.

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52 Nicholas Oresme, *Expositio et Quaestiones in Aristotelis De anima*, III, q. 14, 421: "Quarta conclusio (est) quod omnis conceptus secundo modo dictus est aliquater universalis et aliquater singularis. Est singularis in eo quod concipitur aliqua circumstantia singularis. Est universalis in eo quod per talem conceptum repraesentaretur unum aliud, si esset omnino simile in omnibus accidentibus sensibilibus, sicut de duobus ovis. Et adhuc, si est parva dissimilitudo non semper sensus sciret eam cognoscere."

53 See Evans (1982) 90.

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Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy:
Luther and the Medieval *De Anima* Tradition of Imagination.

1. Introduction

The subject of this paper is Luther's conception of imagination. A particular reason for this topic is that, to best of my knowledge, there is no study of it in Luther research. This may be somewhat surprising because Luther commonly uses the term "imagination" (*imaginatio/imaginaria/imaginare*), and other terms related to it like "fact" (*factum*), "fiction" (*fictum*), "figment" (*figmentum/fingere*), "fantasy" (*phantasia*) and "phantasm" (*phantasma*), in several theological and doctrinal contexts in his works.¹ Thus, the widespread occurrences of these terms in his writings are a *raison d'être* to look more carefully at the subject. My intention here is to take a textually limited, but significant look of how Luther makes use of these terms in his theological argumentation. I take these terms in a "Wittgensteinian" sense, as a kind of "family resemblance" of imaginative concepts. I am not presupposing that Luther had any definite theory of imagination or that these terms were essentially dependent on each other. In the first place, I want to analyse how he uses them. However, for the reader it should be clear that I cannot give here a comprehensive analysis of the issue in Luther, but only present some relevant examples of it.

To anticipate some results of this paper, it would seem that the case of imagination, on a theoretical level, is not very fundamental in Luther. However, it reveals some characteristics of his thinking, and especially his negative attitude to medieval philosophical psychology in a theological context. The conclusions of my paper will show that there is no internal (theological and doctrinal) consistency in the way Luther uses imaginative terms but only an external one or a manner he uses them to criticize false theological and doctrinal views.

The structure of this paper is as follows. At the beginning (2.), I will offer a survey of the function and position of imagination in medieval thought. Imagination and the terms related to it have a long and many-sided historical background, and in the following I can touch upon it only very briefly. In the latter part of my paper (3.) I will point out some typical theological cases in which Luther uses these imaginative terms.

1 *Luthers Werke in www* (<http://luther.chadwyck.co.uk/>) gives by keywords *imagina** 277 hits in 121 entries, *fictu** 74 hits in 51 entries, *figment** 237 hits in 106 entries, *finge** 1139 hits in 539 entries, *ph[f]antasm** 60 hits in 49 entries, *ph[f]antasi** 57 hits in 50 entries.

2. Aristotle's *De anima* and the Medieval Imagination

2.1. *The Problem of Fantasy and Imagination*

The medieval discussion on imagination is based on Aristotle's work *De anima*, first translated into Latin c. 1150 by James of Venice. The book had a very significant position until the 18th century. As for our time, it may still be true what Malcolm Schofield says in his article "Aristotle on the Imagination" that

every educated man knows that Aristotle invented logic. It is not so widely known that he contests with Plato the distinction of having discovered the imagination, ... but it was Aristotle who gave the first extended analytical description of imagining as a distinct faculty of the soul, ...²

In any case, Aristotle's *De anima* was the opening of Western philosophical psychology and shaped its fundamental terminology. Even if Aristotle's legacy concerning imagination may be unknown to modern people, it was quite familiar to medieval authors. As in the cases of many other philosophical topics, they analysed Aristotle's views and tried to systematize the Philosopher's original theories which often seemed, on the surface, inconsistent and cryptic.

One dilemma was terminological. There were two terms in Latin indicating the same psychological faculty, *imaginatio* and *phantasia*. The term *phantasia* is directly transferred from Greek to Latin. It derives from the verb *phainesthai*, primarily meaning "to appear," and when used as a noun, *phantasma*, plural *phantasmata*, it refers to "appearance," "perception" or "vision." As some scholars have pointed out, it is not self-evident at all that the Aristotelian term *phantasia* could be translated as "imagination," or that it could mean anything like what we understand by imagination today.³ It is important to be aware that *phantasia*, unlike *imaginatio*, does not refer to any idea of the pictorial nature of thinking. Etymologically, the closest Greek counterpart to "imagination" is *eikasia*, e.g., the state of perceiving mere images and reflections found in Plato. Both of them connote a visual and pictorial nature of thinking (*imago*, *eikôn*). In Plato, however, the term *eikasia* has no systematic philosophical usage and meaning, and it does not occur in Aristotle.⁴ We encounter a similar problem in Aristotle. The term *phantasia* occurs in many different kinds of circumstances, the relations of which are not very easy to understand.⁵ It is a fundamental tenet of Aristotle's psychology

2 Schofield (1992) 249.

3 Schofield (1992) 249–256.

4 See Bundy (1927) 19–23; Cocking (1991) 1–18.

5 Whether Aristotle's manner of dealing with *phantasia* is consistent or not, see Wedin (1988) 64–99; Schofield (1992) 249–277; Frede (1992) 279–295.

that thinking is not possible without *phantasia* and *phantasmata*. It is difficult for him, however, to relate them to the other parts of the soul. Fantasy and phantasms are neither sensations nor thoughts, but they are something between sense perception and thought faculty. Fundamentally, in Aristotle, *phantasia* belongs to the lower animal part of the soul, not the characteristically human part alone.⁶

2.2. *Imagination and its Background in Medieval Philosophy*

Among Medieval Latin authors, discussion on the problematic nature of fantasy and imagination in human cognition, as described in Aristotle's *De anima*, were a great deal influenced by Arabic sources. The earliest was Avicenna's book concerning the soul and its functions. It was translated around the middle of the twelfth century by Gundissalinus and Avendauth under the title *Liber de anima seu sextus de naturalibus*. It was read as a commentary on Aristotle's work despite the fact that it is actually a part

6 In Aristotle, to mention only some examples, something can appear (*phainetai*) to us in a certain way even if it is not so in reality. The sun seems to our sight smaller than it really is, even though we know that it is bigger than the whole earth. This knowledge does not affect the way we see things. We can have a true belief together with a false appearance at the same time. (*De anima* 428a28–b5; *De insomniis* 460b18–20) There are also visual illusions. If one is sailing in a ship, it seems that the bank is moving, not the ship. (*De insomniis* 460b24–27) A physically (e.g., in a high fever) or mentally sick person can see things other than they really are. (*De insomniis* 460b10–16) In some cases, the sensation can remain although the external object has gone. Strong emotions, like love and fear, can make something appear to be similar to what is desired or feared, although it is not so in reality. (*De insomniis* 460b3–11) Some external physical power (e.g., finger pushing the eye ball) can cause the double vision. (*De insomniis* 462a1) So called “after images,” (Aristotle, of course, does not use the term) are also examples of the work of imagination. The bright light, like the sun, can affect our visual sense organ, that we see it (the sun) even if we have closed our eyes, or some object that we have looked at very intensively for a long time, the object (e.g., colour) seems to shift its place with our gaze. (*De insomniis* 459b) The dream is one of the main areas of fantasy. For example, when a person is falling asleep, there are various images (*eidōla*) in his or her mind. (*De insomniis* 462a9–12) There are many examples which show that memory (*mnēmē*) belongs to the same part of the soul as fantasy, and that it is impossible for memory to work without fantasy. (*De memoria* 450a12–25) To recall something (*mnēmoneuō*, *mnēmoneutos*) is to represent a phantasm. (*De memoria* 453a15) Sometimes people move in their dreams as if they were walking. The causes of these movements are the phantasms. (*De somno et vigilia* 456a25) These phantasms belong to the sensitive faculty, but in a different way, as an imaginative (*phantastikon*) power. (*De insomniis* 459a20–23) Fantasy is a faculty to represent the objects of desire both present and absent and cause the movement towards these objects. There can be no desire without fantasy. (*De anima* 433a18–20, 433b26–30) Hope is also closely connected with fantasy. Fantasy is a kind of “weak perception” (*aisthēsis*). To remember or hope something can affect enjoyment or pleasure (*hēdonē*). When we remember and hope something, we have at the same time a fantasy of the object. (*Rhetorica* 1370a28–35.)

of Avicenna's more independent, Arabic encyclopaedic work *al-Shifâ* ("The Healing").⁷ Albeit not a commentary, it is nevertheless much influenced by Aristotle's *De anima*, and its views proved important for the 13th and 14th century commentaries. Whether fantasy and imagination are one and the same faculty of the soul was an issue for medieval thinkers. The development of this discussion is seen in several philosophical tracts and commentaries on *De anima*, but its influence can also be seen in numerous theological writings. The significance and the extent of this discussion are easy to understand; the nature of the human soul is self evidently in the core of theology. This fact did not only concern Christian theology but the medieval Islamic thought as well.⁸

The role of imagination within the human cognitive faculties was extensively debated among major medieval Arabic philosophers, al-Farabi (d. 950), Avicenna (d. 1037) and Averroes (d. 1198). Two interesting contexts of imagination in Arabic thought were prophetic dreams and religious poetry.⁹ Both topics had their background in Aristotle's writings. The Philosopher had written a short treatise, *On Divination in Sleep*, in which he deals with the problematic question of whether there is any substance to the idea that some persons could receive knowledge concerning future events in dreams and whether it could have an origin in divine causation.¹⁰ Respectively, Aristotle, in the ninth chapter of *Poetics*, had made a distinction between a historian and a poet. There, a difference between the two approaches is based on modal terms. The historian describes particular events and facts or what has actually happened while the poet reflects

7 Avicenna, *Liber De anima seu sextus de naturalibus*. On Avicenna's work and its influence, see Hasse (2000); Knuuttila (2004) 218–255.

8 On the medieval commentaries and tracts on *De anima*, see Hasse (2000) 13–79; Pasnau (1999) xi–xxv; Knuuttila (2004) 218–255.

9 In Arabic philosophy, the prophetic nature of dreams was extensively speculated upon. Avicenna, for example, assumed that some men, when they are asleep, can receive a prophecy through the imaginative faculty. The prophecy is first received by the prophet's intellect as a theoretical thought and then recast by means of the imaginative faculty and expressed in a figurative image. To unmask the theoretical notions behind this figurative language interpretation and allegorical exegesis are needed. Davidson (1992) 140–141.

10 *De divinatione per somnia* 462b12–25: "As to the divination which takes place in sleep, and is said to be based on dreams, we cannot lightly either dismiss it with contempt or give it implicit confidence. The fact that all persons, or many, suppose dreams to possess a special significance, tends to inspire us with belief in it [such divination], as founded on the testimony of experience; and indeed that divination in dreams should, as regards some subjects, be genuine, is not incredible, for it has a show of reason; from which one might form a like opinion also respecting all other dreams. Yet the fact of our seeing no probable cause to account for such divination tends to inspire us with distrust. For, in addition to its further unreasonableness, it is absurd to combine the idea that the sender of such dreams should be God with the fact that those to whom he sends them are not the best and wisest, but merely commonplace persons. If, however, we abstract from the causality of God, none of the other causes assigned appears probable."

on what may happen or might have happened and what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. Therefore, poetry is a more philosophical and serious subject than history, “for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular.”¹¹

From this viewpoint, a theory of imaginative expressions, which is not only emotive but also cognitive, was developed in the context of poetics. There was an agreement that imagination and imaginative utterances, because of their voluntary nature, have nothing to do with truth and assent in the sense of demonstrative science; nevertheless, such utterances could have quasi-cognitive status, analogous to assentive judgments. Not only demonstrative science or dialectics but rhetoric and poetics also use discursive and syllogistic methods. The logic and semantics of poetic utterances can be explained by searching and finding a poetic middle term connecting two other terms. In this sense poetics, too, is a part of logic. Instead of causing something like an intellectual assent or a conclusion, imaginative poetic syllogisms produce acts of imaginative faculty and cause an imaginative acceptance. Thus, imaginative representation involves a procedure that can be seen as parallel to those adjudicative acts that properly belong to the intellect: both are forms of acquiescence. Avicenna, for example, uses the term “acquiescence” as the common genus of cognitive assent and imaginative acceptance. Averroes goes further terminologically: he does not speak of imaginative assent as a substitute for assent, but also deals with imaginative depictions as a means of poetic assent, even though in the strict sense of the word.¹²

After the translation of Avicenna’s *De anima*, his psychology was widely known. Avicenna makes a definite distinction between fantasy and imagination. For him, fantasy is the faculty that receives the forms acquired by the five external senses. Imagination, as distinct from mere fantasy, is the formative faculty and a storehouse of

11 *Poetica* 1451a36–1451b8 “It is, moreover, evident from what has been said, that it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen—what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity. The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or in prose. The work of Herodotus might be put into verse, and it would still be a species of history, with meter no less than without it. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular.”

12 Black (1989) 242–267, (1992) 181–184; Kemal (1991) 153–157. Kemal’s terminological analysis is not as accurate as Black’s, for he speaks throughout of “imaginative assent.” Although the Arabic commentaries on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* became familiar relatively late (Hermannus Alemannus translated Averroes’ Commentaries on Rhetoric and Poetics c. 1256), the scholastics might have been reading about their views on imagination and could evaluate them in a theological context. Interestingly, the 14th century Franciscan, Peter Auriol, when he defends his conception of theology, does not consider it problematic to compare theology with poetics which explains and exposes “poetic fictions” (*poetica figmenta*). See Työriñoja (forthcoming).

the sensible images or forms in which they are retained even though the sensible objects are absent. Avicenna emphasizes that these two functions, receiving and retaining, are different ones.¹³ Besides these two functions, receiving and retaining, there is an imagination understood as an imaginative faculty (*vis imaginativa*) which is properly the faculty of composing and dividing the images retained by the formative imagination.¹⁴

Unlike fantasy, this compositive and voluntary imaginative function is not found in the animal part of the soul. If this part of the soul is incapable of creating new combinations of the stored sense images, the imaginative compositive faculty itself has to belong in some way to the human intellectual and rational soul even though those images by means of which it operates are not entirely free of matter in the manner of the universal intelligible forms. The faculty in question is the same; it is called “cogitative,” when ruled by the intellect, and “imaginative,” when ruled by the sensitive power.¹⁵ Avicenna, nevertheless, wants to distinguish fantasy as a reproductive imagination which only recalls the stored sensitive images from the productive and creative imaginative faculty which is able to compose and divide those images and form new imaginative utterances.

2.3. *The Question of Internal Senses and Intellectual Imagination*

Along with Avicenna's *De anima*, the most important source was Averroes' “Long Commentary” (*Commentarium magnum*) on Aristotle's *De anima*, translated c. 1230.¹⁶ Around that time, Aristotle's *De anima* became more familiar among scholars, and it is after this that we begin to see a great number of commentaries by several medieval authors. According to Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle in *Metaphysics* XII and *De anima*, the imagination that operates through the intellect (*imaginatio per intellectum*) differs from the imagination which, as one of the internal senses (*sensus interior*), depends on the sensitive faculty of the soul.¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, in the disputation *De*

13 Avicenna, *Liber de anima seu sextus de naturalibus*, pars I, cap. 5, 87–88; 19–27.

14 *Liber de anima*, pars I, cap. 5, 89; 44–48.

15 *Liber de anima*, pars IV, cap. 1, 6; 73–78.

16 Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*. Like on many other of Aristotle's works, Averroes wrote three commentaries on *De anima*; “short,” “middle” and “long.” According to Alfred L. Ivry, only the long ones are commentaries in the full sense of the term; short and middle texts are rather epitomes or summaries and paraphrases of an Aristotelian text. Ivry (1997) 511. Only Averroes' Long Commentary was available in Latin to the medieval authors. Ivry has recently translated Averroes' Middle Commentary from Arabic. Ivry (2002). See also Dod (1982) 76.

17 The Latin Averroes uses the expression *imaginatio per intellectum* in the Long Commentary on *De anima*, Book I. Averroes, *Commentarium magnum in Aristotelis De anima libros*, lib. I, 6, com. 3, 15–19, and in his Commentary on the *Metaphysics* XII, com. 37. The context

veritate, refers to Averroes' interpretation of Aristotle's *De anima*, Book III, in which (comment 21) the Commentator uses the term "imagination" (*imaginatio*) of the first operation of the intellect and the term "belief" (*fides*) of the second one.¹⁸ However, in the Long Commentary on *De anima* the term *formatio* is used for this first operation of the intellect.¹⁹ On the other hand, in comment 155, Averroes explains Aristotle's saying that "understanding is a kind of imagining" (*intelligere est quoddam imaginari*). It is clear that imagination differs (*aliud est*) from sensation, but it is not as clear that intellect differs from imagination: "It is estimated that some acts of the intellect are to imagine and some to believe, and that there is no difference (*nulla differentia*) between imagination and intellect."²⁰

2.4. Thomas Aquinas on Fantasy and Imagination as Internal Senses

In the medieval Aristotelian tradition, fantasy and imagination were discussed as a part of the theory of the "internal senses" (*sensus interiores*), analogous to the five external senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste) as presented by Aristotle in *De anima*.²¹ The

of Averroes' comment is the desiring and voluntary acts of the celestial bodies, which are pure intelligences without a sensitive soul. The movement moving them to the good must therefore originate from an intellectual imagination. (The Latin Aristotle does not use the term "imagination" here. See Aristotle, *Metaphysica* XII 7, 1072a26–35.)

18 *De veritate*, q. 14, a. 1, co.

19 *Commentarium magnum*, 455, com. 21, 14–28. The original Arabic terms are the same in Commentaries on *Metaphysics* XII and *De anima* III, and should be translated as *formatio* in Latin. I am indebted to Taneli Kukkonen for pointing out these terminological vacillations in different translations. In his Commentary on the *Sentences*, Aquinas uses the term "formation" and "simple intelligence" of the first operation of the intellect by referring to the position of the "philosophers" without explicitly mentioning Averroes. By this operation, the intellect comprehends what a thing really and properly is, or the quiddity of a thing. This first operation, which concerns the concept formation, and to which simple words correspond in the domain of language, is neither true nor false. (*Scriptum super Sententiis* III, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, c. 135.) The second operation of the intellect concerns what is properly true or false. Its function is to affirm or negate by means of composition or division the concepts formed by the first operation of intellect. On the level of language, this operation corresponds to the formation of a complex expression (*vox complexa*) or proposition (*enuntiatio*). (*Scriptum super Sententiis* III, d. 23, q. 2, a. 2, c. 136.)

20 *Commentarium magnum*, lib. III, 364–365, com. 155, 11–19.

21 The medieval authors, Aquinas for example, developed the theory of a hierarchy of the external senses. Some of the external senses are more spiritual than others depending on how much they are affected by material causes. The vision is more spiritual than the other senses because there is no immediate material causal contact between the sight and the object of the sight. Touch and taste, on the contrary, presuppose an immediate material and causal contact between the sense organ and its object. See Burnyeat (2001).

role that these internal senses play in cognition was a debated question, as was the relation they have to the intellectual faculties.²² Because humans have the faculty to re-enact experiences, sensations and images when the objects are not present to the external senses, one needs to presume an array of internal senses to complement the external senses: but what is the nature and task of these internal senses, and how many are they? A typical list would include the so-called common sense (*sensus communis*), fantasy or imagination (*phantasia, imaginatio*), memory (*memoria*), and estimation (*aestimatio*).

With reference to the reception of this Aristotelian *De anima* of fantasy and imagination, I take Thomas Aquinas as my paradigmatic case. Aquinas agrees with the idea that there must be internal senses by which we can apprehend things, not only as present but also as absent. There must be some internal faculty in the human soul which does not only receive and retain different sensible forms but which can also re-enact and operate with them by forming new imaginative combinations. The internal senses can also perceive features of an object which are not accessible to the external senses. A typical example is estimation. Perfect animals, and humans among them, can perceive that some object is dangerous. But this dangerousness is not a perceptual property in the same sense as a colour or size, for example. It is an “intention” or a significance of the thing in relation to its usefulness or harmfulness. This presupposes, however, the faculty of fantasy and imagination. In animals, this property is a kind of instinct, but in humans it is a cogitative and particular reason by means of which humans can react in particular situations in a proper way.²³

As seen above, Avicenna made an explicit distinction between fantasy and imagination.²⁴ Aquinas, however, did not accept this position. In his *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas deals with the question of the number of the internal senses (*interiores sensus*), and whether fantasy and imagination are one and the same faculty or power (*potentia, virtus*). Aquinas quotes Avicenna, according to whom there are five internal sense faculties all having different functions; common sense, fantasy, imagination, memory and estimation, and he says that Avicenna wanted to reserve the term “imagination” to mean the faculty by means of which complex utterances, like “golden mountain,” are composed (or divided) of the imaginative forms (*forma imaginata*). In contrast to

22 Aristotle does not use the expression “internal senses.” It is probably Augustine’s invention. Augustine uses also the expression “internal faculty” (*interior vis*) as its synonym. On the history of internal senses, see Wolfson (1973) 250–314. Wolfson has not found the term “internal senses” prior to Augustine who uses it in *Confessiones* I 20; *De libero arbitrio* II 3–5, and *Confessiones* VII 17. Wolfson (1973) 252.

23 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 78, a. 4, co.

24 I have to pass over Aquinas’s Commentary on Aristotle’s *De anima* here. See Pasnau (2002).

Avicenna, Aquinas himself thinks that fantasy and imagination are identical powers of the internal sense, even if they function differently. Both signify powers by which the forms acquired through the senses are retained and preserved. For Aquinas, to assume this kind of fifth power is superfluous and the compositive faculty can be explained by means of imaginative power, which is really the same as fantasy. Hence, only four internal senses are actually needed; common sense, imagination (i.e., fantasy), estimation, and memory.²⁵

Aquinas also agrees with the idea that the internal senses have a decisive role in intellectual thought. Thinking is not possible without *phantasia* and *phantasmata*. In this life, it is impossible for our intellect to understand anything actually without turning to the phantasms. This does not concern only a situation when the intellect acquires new knowledge but also when it uses the knowledge that it has already acquired. Both powers necessarily need the imagination. The intellect can understand the universals only indirectly, by apprehending particulars first. Particulars are apprehended only by senses and imagination. Therefore, the intellect has to turn to the phantasms in every act of knowing.²⁶

3. *Luther and the Medieval De anima Tradition of Internal Senses*

3.1. *Luther's Attitude to Avicenna and Averroes*

It is interesting to note that Luther does not refer to this medieval faculty psychology based on the medieval *De anima* tradition of external and internal senses based on Avicenna's and Averroes' views on Aristotle's *De anima*.²⁷ There is, as far as I can see, only one reference in Luther to the "internal senses." This can be found in his marginal comments (*scholia*) on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Luther asks what the apostle Paul means when he says that faith comes from hearing (*ex auditu*). Obviously, this is not a question of the external sense of hearing alone. Faith is an apprehension of the signification and meaning of the words (*significationis seu sensus verborum*). Signification and meaning do not concern external senses; therefore, hearing, in this case, must be internal (*auditus interior*), not external (*auditus exterior*). Faith, however, is not merely an internal act. Faith, in the first place, presupposes an external hearing of the word

25 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 78, a. 4, co. See Black (2000), 50–75.

26 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 84, a. 7, co.

27 Luther had to know this tradition on the basis of his studies in Erfurt where he was under the influence of Jodocus Trutfetter and Bartholomaeus Arnoldi de Usingen. Luther was also familiar with Pierre d'Ailly's and Gabriel Biel's writings. On the philosophical anthropology in Erfurt, see Kärkkäinen (2004). On Luther's studies in Erfurt, see Kleineidam (1968) 151–169.

and teachings of Christ, but nevertheless, it must be apprehended and understood by the internal sense (*sensus interioris*) of hearing before it can be assented to.²⁸

As for Avicenna and Averroes, there is a small number of explicit references in Luther to these influential Arabic authors, and above and beyond, these references concern other sides of their thinking than the problem of the internal senses. For example, in his sermon on the Holy Sacrament, Luther briefly mentions Averroes who, according to him, has said that the Christians are very stupid people because they eat the one whom they worship. For Luther, these are “Satanic verses” (“Huiusmodi verba Satan iam treibt”), because “God has given us the doctrines which are stupid to the world.”²⁹ As for Avicenna, there is one substantial and positive reference in Luther’s gloss to his *First Lectures on Psalms* 1513/15. There is a question of the relation of the outer or spoken word (*vox*) to the internal mental word (*verbum mentale*) in the Christological context. In what sense is Christ the incarnation of the Divine Word, or the Word having humanity? Luther refers to Avicenna, according to whom the human word (*vox*) is the vehicle (*vehiculum*) by virtue of which one’s own internal “mental and secret word” (*verbum mentale secretum*) comes to be knowable, and is manifested to other people. This is, according to Luther, similar to Augustine’s position that Christ became a “vehicle” and “instrument” by which God is made knowable to us in an instrumental and sensible way.³⁰ The nature of the word is to be heard (*Natura enim verbi est audiri*). It is different from the nature of species and images of things which is to be seen (*Natura enim speciei et imaginis est videri*).³¹

Some Avicennian and Averroistic themes are readily available in Luther’s philosophical theses in the *Heidelberg disputation* (1518), even though they are not mentioned by name. Here Luther deals with the questions of the eternity of the world and the immortality of the soul. One of the issues in this context was the problem of the intellect, and especially the question of the possible and agent intellects (*intellectus possibilis* vs. *intellectus agens*) and their relations as proposed in the third book of *De anima*.³²

28 *Luthers Randbemerkungen zu den Sentenzen des Petrus Lombardus* (1509/21), Schriften, Bd. 9, 92, 28–36. There are also some interesting comments on Augustine’s *De vera religione* and the idea of a human being as an image of God. *Luthers Randbemerkungen zu Augustini opuscula* (1509/21), Schriften, Bd. 9, 13, 35–14, 13. *Dictata super Psalterium* (1513–1516), Schriften, Bd. 3, 19, 24–26.

29 *Sermon von dem Sakrament des Leibes und Blutes Christi, wider die Schwarmgeister* (1526), Schriften, Bd. 19, 498a, 13–16.

30 *1. Psalmenvorlesung* (1513/15), Schriften, Bd. 55.1, 257, 24–34.

31 *Dictata super Psalterium* (1513–1516), Schriften, Bd. 4, 9, 18–27. It is interesting to note that Luther here also confronts hearing with seeing. He seems to be in agreement with the late medieval idea that language and thought do not have pictorial or imaginary natures. On the medieval visual metaphysics of knowledge, see Työrinoja (2000).

32 *Die philosophischen Thesen der Heidelberger Disputation mit ihren Probationes* (1518), Schriften,

Avicenna's and Averroes' interpretations of Aristotle's distinction between the agent and possible intellect and the question of their relations caused particular problems for scholastic theology.³³ The question was a very passionate theme in medieval discussion because of its affiliation to the immortality of the soul. This issue was dominated by a view that an individuating principle is based on the lower sensible or material faculties of the soul.³⁴ The problem culminated in the question whether an individual soul can survive after bodily death. The typical view was that both Avicenna and Averroes prefer the idea of the separate intellect. Avicenna proposed that there is an agent intellect that could participate with the human intellect even without a perception. For Averroes, there is no individual eternal life, but only a universal intellect that can survive after death. Both of them, even if in a slightly different meaning, proposed that the intellect is in some way separated from its individual actualization, and that only the intellectual and universal cognitive part of the soul can survive, but not an individual part involving sensitive accidental features of the soul.³⁵ Luther, in the philosophical theses of his *Heidelberg Disputation*, is heavily arguing against the idea of the separate intellect and that no more than the intellectual part of the human soul could survive after death.³⁶

3.2. *The Term factum in Luther*

What does Luther mean by the term "fact" (*factum*)? There is, I think, no term in modern languages which could express exactly the same meaning as the Latin term *factum*, which is the participle form of the Latin verb *fieri*. In the following, I will only refer to how Luther uses the term *factum* in *De servo arbitrio* (1525) as a critical conceptual tool against Erasmus. There Luther sees the basic meaning of *factum* in the Biblical phrase of the Gospel of John: "Deus caro factum est," "God became a man."

Bd. 59. On Luther's philosophical theses in the *Heidelberg Disputation*, see Dieter (2001) 431–631. On Aristotle's distinction between an agent or active intellect (*nous poiêtikos*) and passive intellect (*nous pathêtikos*), see Kosman (1992) 343–358.

33 See Dales (1995).

34 On the other side of this discussion was the Augustinian and Franciscan position that God had created each soul separately. This means that every soul has some kind of individual being which cannot be reduced to the common human nature. See Gracia (1994).

35 It is noteworthy, that in the 13th century, what has been termed an Avicennian interpretation of Augustine's theory of illumination can be traced (Etienne Gilson, "augustinisme avicennisant"). On Avicenna's interpretation, the active intellect in which the individual human intellects participate by their cognitive acts was identified with a separate "angelic" intellect. Respectively, the Augustinian version identified the active intellect with the separate divine illuminating intellect. Bonaventure and Aquinas refer to the views which "some theologians" have presented. According to Adam of Buckfield, "many theologians hold this opinion." Hasse (2000) 203–223.

36 There is a profound exegesis and analysis of this problem in Dieter (2001) 463–563.

Factum refers to all those revealed Biblical facts concerning incarnation, the passion of Christ, and God's Trinitarian nature. Luther admits that everything in the Bible is not clear. But even if there is something obscure or abstruse in the Scriptures, it is not always caused by "the majesty of the thing" but "our ignorance of vocabulary and grammar." In those cases, we can use all the knowledge we have. This cannot, however, be used to make these facts relative, as Erasmus is doing, and let philosophy rule over theology.³⁷

In *De servo arbitrio*, one of the main problems is the modal term "necessity" and what it means in different theological contexts. By the terms *factum* and *facta res*, Luther denotes any contingent event contrary to something which is necessary. Even though the essence of God is necessary he can act in a contingent way. The facts (*facta*) are not necessary, and they have no necessary essence. This implies that we cannot identify these facts with God as he is in his own essence. Luther was familiar with the medieval modal logic in which the distinction between two different ways, *necessitas consequentiae* and *necessitas consequentis*, were used to analyze the modal meaning of necessity. The distinction was also called the distinction between *de dicto* and *de re*. Thus, according to Luther, if God wills something, it is necessary that it will happen, but it does not imply that the fact which happens is necessary. There is a question of necessity of consequence (*necessitas consequentiae*), not necessity of consequent (*necessitas consequentis*). The correct analysis is that necessity modifies the proposition as a whole in the following form: "It is necessary that if God wills something it will happen," or *de dicto*. The scope of the modal term is the whole consequence. But, it does not concern the consequent, or *de re*, that everything happens necessarily. On the contrary, what God wills still remains as a contingent fact.³⁸

On the other hand, according to Luther, we are inclined to understand the nature of contingent facts entirely mistakenly. For example, when God orders, in his Decalogue, that we are obliged to act in a right way, we think that it is possible for us to comply it. It sounds like a logical principle that, if something is an obligation, it must be possible to obey it. It seems unreasonable to us that anything impossible could be an obligation. But, for Luther, in this case we think like the boys in the grammar school ("grammatici et pueri in triviis sciunt") that from a grammatical imperative form (*verbis imperativi modi*) one could simply infer an indicative (*indicativum*) form and think that by necessity it is actually possible for us ("ut imperatum sit, etiam necessario factum aut factu possibile

37 *De servo arbitrio* (1525), Schriften, Bd. 18, 606, 16–35. The understanding of theological facts, the nature of doctrinal vocabulary and grammar, and their relationships to philosophy are also central topics in Luther's disputation from the year 1539, *Disputatio de sententia: Verbum caro factum est* (Joh. 1, 14), Schriften, Bd. 39.2, 1–33. See Työrinoja (1986) 141–178; Dieter (2001) 378–430.

38 *De servo arbitrio*, 617, 2–20. See also Knuuttila (1977), (1982).

sit”).³⁹ Although these commandments in themselves concern contingent things and therefore are also in a logical sense possible, it is impossible for us to obey them because our free choice (*liberum arbitrium*) has been made powerless to obey them.⁴⁰

3.3. *Use of Imaginative Terms in Luther's Theological Argumentation*

Luther brings the imaginative terms, in a critical sense, into play time and again in the various contexts of theological and doctrinal matters, referring to the false conceptions. In the following, I will show some characteristic examples. In the *Commentary on Galatians* (1519), his main issue is the question of the human freedom to obey God's orders. The general tone is similar to his later work *De servo arbitrio*. For Luther, the right meaning of freedom is to be at the service of love with joy and to act gratuitously without any external coercion (“non coacte sed hilariter et gratuito”) or obligation. In contrast to that, there is the carnal imagination (*carnalis imaginatio*) of freedom which is a freedom from love and the divine law and order, and actually the freedom to sin. The source of this kind of meaning of freedom is an example of the human imagination (*imaginatio ex humano sensu*).⁴¹

On the other hand, Luther also knows the idea that God can appear in the human imaginative vision (*per imaginariam visionem*). These visions, however, do not occur in dreams but happen when a recipient is awake (“non tanquam in somnis, sed vigilantibus”). This concerns especially such persons as Abraham. He was not sleeping when God spoke to him in those visions. The imaginary ideas Abraham received in this state were facts and came to him without speculation (“sine speculatione facta est”), with open eyes and awake (“oculis apertis et vigilantibus”). These visions, however, were figurative and in need of interpretation (“hae visiones esse figurae, quae interpretatione opus habent”). This kind of revelatory imaginary vision has to be separated from those inferior imaginary visions in which the body is sleeping and cannot use the corporeal senses (*organis sensuum*), such as came to Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar who saw images of the future events (*futurorum eventuum imagines*) in their dreams.⁴²

Luther uses the terms “fantasy” and “phantasm” as synonyms for the false theological conceptions. In his *Operationes in Psalmos* (1519–1521), for example, he deals with question of the relations between the infused theological virtues, faith, hope and love. Luther criticizes the scholastic doctrine of the habit as an acquired permanent ability to act a certain way. According to him, the conceptions that the habit and its acts are really distinct from each other (“aliud sit habitus et aliud actus eius”) are

39 *De servo arbitrio*, 677, 24–36.

40 *De servo arbitrio*, 691, 20–26.

41 *In epistolam Pauli ad Galatas M. Lutheri commentarius* (1519), Schriften, Bd. 2, 575, 1–28.

42 *Genesisvorlesung* (cap. 1–17) (1535/38), cap. 15, Schriften, Bd. 42, 555, 25–40.

“human phantasms” (“phantasmata illa puto humana esse”).⁴³ Similarly, he criticizes the theologians of Louvain and Cologne that their logic, philosophy and theology are “masks of the human phantasms” (*larvis humanorum phantasmatum*).⁴⁴ In the *Disputation on Justification* (1536), Luther refutes the idea that a human being, when endowed with the infused grace, could fulfil all of God’s decrees as “dialectical fantasies (*dialecticae phantasiae*) and opinions (*dialecticae opinioniones*).”⁴⁵

Luther also typically uses imaginative terms in the Christological context, for example, when he opposes the Manichean view that Christ is not a real human being but only a phantasm (*fantasma*).⁴⁶ For Luther, the body of Christ is a real natural human body, not a fantastic body (*fantasticum corpus*).⁴⁷ Similarly, he uses the terms fiction (*fictus*) and figment (*figmentum*) as synonyms. Both of them refer to false theological conceptions. In the *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), Luther opposes the idea that we could, by our nature, love God more than anything else. On the contrary, we love ourselves by nature more than God. Saying that God and his will is our first object of love is merely a “figment.” We love above all our own lives and wills.⁴⁸ In the same way, Luther attacks speculations on the power of indulgences. They are merely “figments” and “illusions” (*figmenta et illusiones*).⁴⁹ Luther also criticizes medieval practices of penitence which used the distinction between attrition and contrition which include human comments, fictions (*fictitia*) and figments (*figmenta*).⁵⁰ The doctrine of transubstantiation is also a human figment (*figmento humanae opinionis*). For Luther, the bread and wine are true and real elements of the Lord’s Supper. The doctrine of transubstantiation, in contrast, by simulating Aristotle’s philosophy of substance and accident, is not necessary, but on the contrary, an absurd new imposition of the words (*nova verborum impositio*). The Church, for twelve hundred years, believed truthfully in the reality of the Eucharist without need for that fictional (*fictitia*) doctrine of transubstantiation. It is, therefore, only a human opinion, figment and fabrication without any Scriptural basis.⁵¹

43 *Operationes in Psalmos* (1519–1521), Schriften, Bd. 5, 176, 1–16.

44 *Condemnatio doctrinalis librorum Martini Lutheri per quosdam Magistros Nostros Lovanienses et Colonienses facta. Responsio Lutheriana ad eandem damnationem* (1520), Schriften, Bd. 6, 186, 5–10.

45 *Die Disputation de iustificatione* (1536), Schriften, Bd. 39.1, 119, 1–28.

46 *De servo arbitrio* (1525), Schriften, Bd. 18, 707, 29–31.

47 *Vorlesung über den I. Johannisbrief* (1527), Schriften, Bd. 20, 602, 9–14. *Ibid.* 728, 7–10. *Dominica quarta post epiphanie* (Predigten 1531), Schriften, Bd. 34.1, 134, 19–21.

48 *Disputatio Heidelbergae habita* (1518), Schriften, Bd. 1, 374, 17–24.

49 *Resolutiones disputationum de Indulgentiarum virtute* (1518), Schriften, Bd. 1, 568, 25–30: “et illusiones praedicare, etiam si indulgentiae utilissimae essent.”

50 *Ad dialogum Silvestri Prieratis de potestate papae responsio* (1518), Schriften, Bd. 1, 669, 7–14.

51 *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium* (1520), Schriften, Bd. 6, 509, 15–34. The terms *figmentum* and *fictum* appear repeatedly in *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium* 570, 1–10.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have traced Luther's ways of using the term "imagination" and its related terms. The main result is that there is no hint that Luther accepted medieval faculty psychology concerning imagination as an internal sense. Imagination has no constructive role in his theology. On the contrary, he regularly uses the imaginative terms as "labels" indicating false theological and doctrinal conceptions. It seems that there is no internal consistency in Luther's usages on the substantial level.

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PART III
MODERN THOUGHT

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Necessity, Immutability, and Descartes

No one has done more to bring into focus the complex story of the development of modal theory in the Middle Ages and the early modern period than Professor Simo Knuuttila. His pioneering work on the role of the connections between necessity and temporal universality and on the development of theories of the relations between time and modality has revolutionized our understanding of the history of the development of modal notions.¹ Of course much still remains to be done. In particular the complex story of how the theory of modality developed between the 14th century and the seventeenth remains largely untold. This paper does not attempt to tell it but attempts merely to locate some of the issues. Its focus is on Descartes, whose modal views are not his focus and are in any case complex, and it has an eye to Descartes' rather peculiar claim that the basic laws of nature are in some sense necessary. This claim seems at first blush in tension with a close connection which is also found in Descartes' work between possibility and conceivability. I used to think that precisely because of the link between possibility and conceivability in Descartes—the link which has it that everything clearly and distinctly conceivable is possible—the laws of nature could not be really necessary.² After all surely we could conceive of nature being governed by laws different from those Descartes supposed. (It turns out that it is—and how could it be if alternatives to Descartes' laws were really inconceivable!) And surely Descartes himself was not so benighted as to think otherwise. But if we can clearly and distinctly conceive different laws of nature then they are possible and if they are possible the ones we have are not necessary. Q.E.D. Of course for Descartes the laws of nature have some special status—they are immutable—perhaps a sense of “necessary” but one neither central to Descartes' thought nor acknowledged in the best modal society.

I have come both to think better of immutability and to think that it plays a greater role in Descartes' modal thinking than I had realized. This paper attempts to explore the notion a little—both within and without the Cartesian text—with an eye to seeing how close we can come to accepting the claim that immutability is really Descartes' central modal notion and that it is central to his picture of the operations of nature.

1 Much, but by no means all, of Prof. Knuuttila's work in this area is summarized in Knuuttila (1993).

2 For example, when I wrote “Descartes's Possibilities” (Normore 1991).

In any such exploration Simo Knuuttila's work both on Descartes' modal conceptions and on those of his medieval predecessors is never far from the surface.

Here is a claim of a sort with which contemporary modal theory is familiar: It is possible for any given living human to be in Uluru right now. I don't mean that it is possible that we are, for I at least am pretty certain that some of us are not, and I don't mean that it is possible for us to get from wherever we are to Uluru in the twinkling of an eye—so quickly that (almost) no time passed at all. I mean that it is possible, despite the fact that we quite clearly are not as a matter of fact in Uluru, for us to be there right now.

This is a puzzling claim. We have little difficulty providing paraphrases of it which sound better—like that there are possible situations or worlds in which we or counterparts of us are in Uluru right now—and these might help explicate what we mean when we make the bald claim that we can be in Uluru right now, but they don't dispel at least my unease that the sense of “possible” at work here is a highly artificial one. One might well wonder how such an artificial sense of such a common word emerged.

The full story is no doubt very complex but a number of scholars, first among them Prof. Knuuttila, have argued that this conception of possibility arose in the 14th century—perhaps out of what John Duns Scotus and those who followed him made of some suggestions made by Henry of Ghent and others to deal with some problems about the will and some problems about the Immaculate Conception. What Scotus and his fellows are thought to have introduced is a notion of synchronic as contrasted with diachronic possibility—the view that there are unrealized possibilities which co-exist with the realized ones which make up what is actual. The history of the modal notions in the Middle Ages into which this discovery fits remains more controversial. On the version of this story which I have favored the most common view of modality before Scotus had it be a matter of the powers of things, so that on this most common view to claim A to be possible was to ascribe to some thing a power to bring A about. Such powers were linked to time because of the Aristotelian dictum that the actualization of a power is change and that time is the measure of change. Thus, in this framework, possibility is always with respect to the future. What Scotus and those around him did to introduce synchronic possibilities was to introduce a “non-evident” power for the opposite of what is actual at the time at which it is in fact actual. Scotus, however, did not break completely with the older picture and tried to hold both that the past was necessary and that the present, like the future, was not. This proved a difficult position and later figures abandoned it in favor of the view that the past, present and future are all on the same modal footing—all contingent and all available to the absolute power of God.

I used to think that this last view—that what is past, what is present and what is future are all equally contingent—was the common view in the Late Middle Ages and was the scholastic view most accessible in the early modern period, but I have come to

doubt it. Such modern figures as Descartes and Luther accepted the necessity of the past even though they saw all of time as equally in the power of God. How could they have done so? Moreover, some, Descartes, for example, regarded the laws of nature as necessary without distinguishing some special sense of “necessary” for that purpose. How could they have done that? In both cases they did so, I suspect, because they either identified or came close to identifying necessity with immutability.

To see what is involved (and what is at stake) in such a claim it were perhaps best to locate the medieval history of immutability itself. We might begin with Robert Grosseteste. Grosseteste does not equate necessity and immutability but he does distinguish immutability as a kind of necessity. He begins his *De libero arbitrio* by distinguishing the immutable from what he calls the simply necessary. In the second recension of that work he writes:

I say therefore that the necessary is twofold. In one way what does not have a power in any way for its opposite either with a beginning or without—of which sort this is “Two and three are five”—for that does not have a power either before time or in time to not be true. And such is simply necessary.

There is another necessary which neither according to the past nor according to the present nor according to the future has a power for its opposite, yet without beginning there was a power for this and there was a power for its opposite. Such is *that the Antichrist will be a future thing* and all of those which are *de futuro*, because their truth, when it is, cannot have non-being after being as was shown above. There is however a power for this: that they will have been false from eternity and without a beginning. And from such a possibility from eternity for being and non-being it follows that the thing is in itself contingent and not because it is able to have non-being after being. For there are many contingent things which will not have non-being after being like the soul of the Antichrist.³

3 Robert Grosseteste, *De libero arbitrio*, c. 6, 2nd recension, ed. Baur, 168, 26–169, 15: “Dico igitur, quod est necessarium duplex: uno modo, quod non habet posse aliquo modo ad eius oppositum vel cum initio vel fine, cuiusmodi est hoc: ‘duo et tria esse quinque’.—Istud enim posse non habuit neque ante tempus, neque in tempore ad non esse verum. Et tale est necessarium simpliciter. Est et aliud necessarium, quod neque secundum praeteritum, neque secundum praesens, neque secundum futurum habet posse ad eius oppositum, sine tamen initio fuit posse ad hoc et fuit posse ad eius oppositum, et tale est ‘antichristum fore futurum’ et omnium eorum, quae sunt de futuro, quod eorum veritas, cum est, non potest habere non-esse post esse, ut supra ostensum est. Est tamen posse ad hoc, ut ab aeterno et sine initio fuerint falsa. Et ad talem possibilitatem ab aeterno ad esse et non-esse sequitur, quod res est in se contingens, et non quia potest habere non-esse post esse. Plura enim sunt contingentia, quae non habebunt non-esse post esse, sicut anima antichristi.”

Grosseteste goes on to claim that God's knowledge is characterized by this second mode of necessity so that, while God's knowledge never could change, God could have known from all eternity what he does not know and not have known what he knows. He then continues:

And from this power which is for both of opposites, namely [for them to have been] true and false without beginning and to have been known and not known without beginning, there follows the contingency of things, as was said. And conversely from the contingency of things there follows this power for both without a beginning. Thus therefore those things which are true *de futuro* have necessity in some part and similarly [things] such as "God knows A," "Isaiah knew this truth," because the truth of such is not able to cease nor can they be changed from true to false. And they have contingency from another part because of the power to true and false without a beginning, from which power, as has been said, the contingency of things follows. Nor however are they thus purely contingent as it is contingent that Socrates is white because he is able in the future to cease to be white. For this is in every way contingent. But in this "Two and three are five" there is necessity in every way.⁴

The simply necessary is what never could be or could have been otherwise. Grosseteste's example is "Two and three are five." The immutable is what cannot be one way after having been another. Grosseteste seems to speak of immutability strictly (in which sense what is immutable and is one way at any time must be that way at every time) and loosely (in which sense what is one way at one time must be that way throughout a given period of time). He claims that the truth of sentences about the future is immutable and seems to mean it in the looser sense. For example, says he, if "The Antichrist will be" ever was true then it will be true until the Antichrist comes. Exactly what is going on here is closely intertwined with a debate, one which exercised a number of twelfth- and thirteenth-century thinkers, about whether the proper bearers of truth-value could

4 *Ibid.*, 170, 4–17: "Et ex hac potentia, quae est ad utrumque oppositorum, scilicet verum et falsum sine initio et scisse et non scisse sine initio, sequitur rerum contingentia, ut dictum est. Et e contrario ex contingentia rerum sequitur hoc posse sic ad utrumque sine initio. Sic ergo ea, quae vera sunt de futuro, habent necessitatem ex parte aliqua, et similiter talia 'Deus scit A', 'Isaias scivit hoc verum', quia veritas talium non potest desinere, nec possunt alterari a vero in falsum.—Habent quoque ex parte alia contingentiam, quia posse ad verum et falsum sine initio, ex quo posse, ut praedictum est, sequitur rerum contingentia. Nec tamen sunt sic pure contingentia, ut est hoc contingens: Socratem esse album, quia potest in futuro desinere esse albus. Hic enim est omnino contingentia.—Sed in hac 'duo et tria esse quinque' est omnino necessitas."

themselves change truth-value. We might, with an eye to Descartes, say that Grosseteste has distinguished the immutable and the eternally immutable.

Grosseteste distinguishes at least three modal strengths: the simply contingent like “Socrates is white,” which though true can be false and can be true at one time and false at another, the immutable like “The Antichrist is going to be” which can be false but, if true at one time, is true at every (relevant) time, and the simply necessary like “Two and three are five” which simply cannot be false.

Grosseteste uses this apparatus to explain how God can know what he neither knows nor will know. God’s knowledge is immutable but not simply necessary. The contingent truths which God knows (like that the Antichrist is going to be) are such that were their contradictories to be true (which is possible) God would know it and would have known it from all eternity. God’s knowledge can be other than it is but it cannot be one way at one time and another at another time.

For Grosseteste God is not merely immutable in the sense that he cannot be different at different times, God is absolutely immutable in the sense that even if what he knew were completely different he would be the same. This is possible, Grosseteste thinks, because for God the act of knowing A is the very same act by which not-A would be known were it true. God’s power to know the unrealized member of a pair of opposites is itself always realized because it is numerically the same as the power to know the realized member of the pair. Grosseteste argues for this remarkable view first by suggesting that if it were not the case that any free agent exercises the same power in willing something as would have been exercised in willing its contrary then we could not explain how at the moment of its creation the Devil has the power to will good while actually willing evil. (We have here, I suggest, one source for Duns Scotus’ non-evident power for opposites.)

Grosseteste supports the view in a second way by an analogy. Divine cognition is like sight on an extromission theory of vision. Just as the same ray of light which in fact illumines A would illumine B, were B where A is, so the same “mental ray” by which God knows that the Antichrist will come would suffice to know that the Antichrist will not come were that the case.⁵ For Grosseteste the past and the future are equally immutable but he seems to think that some aspects of the future are merely possible

5 This may seem a very strange doctrine to a contemporary reader but I suggest it should not. On late twentieth-century externalist account of cognition the content of a mental act can vary without any variation in the intrinsic properties of the cognizer. On such theories it could be that I am thinking of H₂O while my molecularly twin-earth doppelganger is thinking of XYZ just because it is H₂O which has been related to me in the way that XYZ has been related to him. The content of the mind of Grosseteste’s God seems similarly fixed by its relational rather than its intrinsic properties—though no doubt Grosseteste would reject any suggestion that God’s cognition is causally dependent on what it grasps.

while every aspect of the present and past is not.⁶ Whether he thinks that there is a sense of “necessary” in which the past is necessary but the future is not is less clear. As Neil Lewis has argued, the key concept in Grosseteste’s analysis of both simple necessity and immutability is that of power. Something is possible just in case there is a power which can bring it about. With respect to what is immutable but not necessary *simpliciter* these powers seem, as Lewis urges, to just be the power of God. For example, in the first recension Grosseteste suggests that

[t]he eternal power (*posse*) for *that the Antichrist was future* to have had truth and not to have had truth without beginning is nothing but the power of God by which he was able from eternity and without beginning to will or not will that Antichrist will be or to know or not know that Antichrist will be.⁷

Immutable truths are necessary even though God may, from all eternity, have the power to falsify them from all eternity. Although Grosseteste does not say so, we may presume that the purely contingent truths, like “Socrates is white,” are purely contingent because both God and creatures have the power to make them change their truth-value from time to time.

Why then does Grosseteste regard immutability as a kind of necessity and what modal status does he give the past?

At least a partial answer to the first of these questions can be found by looking at what some late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century authors have to say about possibility. If, for example, we look in *Ut dicit* we find:

And it should be known that “possible” is said in all these ways [those in which “necessary” and “contingent” are said] and many more ways yet. For “possible” is said *cum re et cum actu* as in “The rider is able to ride,” *cum re et ante actum* as in “The boy is able to ride although he is not riding,” [and] *ante rem et ante actum* as in “The Antichrist is able to ride.”⁸

And if we look in the treatise on appellation edited as Tract XIV of the *Logica Modernorum* by De Rijk we find even more explicitly:

But it should be noted that power is signified in a threefold way by this word “*potest*” and in different modes of signifying it is restricted and amplified. For

6 *De libero arbitrio*, c. 8, ed. Baur, 183, 22–24.

7 *De libero arbitrio*, c. 9, 1st recension, 59, 719–722. I owe the translation to N. Lewis’ typescript “New Foundations for Modal Theory in Robert Grosseteste,” p. 12.

8 *Ut dicit*, ed. De Rijk (1967).

there is the power *ante rem et ante actum* like that power by which the Antichrist is able to be a human. And according to this power this word “*potest*” ampliates the term placed before it as much as the term placed after it. Then there is the power *cum re ante actum* like the power by which I am able to run. And according to this this word “*potest*” only ampliates this word “to run” with respect to that which is future. And there is the power *cum re et cum actu* like that power by which Socrates is able to run if he is running. And according to this power nothing is amplified—indeed it only restricts.⁹

What these texts also make clear is that, if we except the power to do what you are already doing, powers are thought of as future directed. Some of them are for future states of future things and some for future states of present things. But all of those which are not *cum re et cum actu* are for the future. Indeed Grosseteste himself says in his first recension that “a possibility *sine actu* is only with respect to the future.” Unactualized powers are for the future and possibilities are correlated with powers. Actualized powers are *cum re et cum actu* and so at best powers for the present. As we have seen, Grosseteste has himself argued that in the case of rational powers the power for X is the same power as that for its contrary and so that a rational being’s power for X is actualized if the rational being is doing the contrary of X. Even if one follows Grosseteste here one at most gets the result that there are powers and so possibilities with respect to the future and with respect to the present. If one adds the further suggestion that God’s relation to all of time is like a rational creature’s relation to the present one can generate a (actualized) divine power over the past. But one needs the whole of Grosseteste’s picture to do it.

The picture we have been tracing in Grosseteste suggests a close connection between power and possibility. Given the Aristotelian idea that time is the measure of change and that change is the actualization of a power, we have what I suspect is the intuitive ground of a principle I call Auriol’s Principle in honour of the 14th-century thinker who, perhaps more than anyone before him, made it the cornerstone of his approach to truth.

(A) If x is A then x can be $\neg A$ if and only if it can change from being A to being $\neg A$.

The Principle has it that something can be other than it is only if it can change. This picture of modality is deeply embedded in our ordinary ways of thinking. The puzzlement I expressed at the beginning about whether it is really possible for us to be

9 *Tractatus de proprietatibus sermonum*, ed. De Rijk (1967) 728–729.

in Uluru right now shows this. Suppose I asked you whether it is possible for you to leave the room in which you are? Most of you would no doubt think it was. But suppose I asked you whether it is possible for you to be already doing so? I don't know what you would say. Twentieth-century theorists' conceptions of modality traded heavily on the analogy between modality and generality—necessity as truth in all models or all worlds or at all times or in all cases—but there remains in our ordinary use of modal terms a close connection between modality and power.

Something which cannot change is immutable and something which cannot be other than it is is necessary. Auriol's Principle has it that something is necessary if and only if it is actual and immutable. One half of this biconditional is (relatively) unproblematic. If x is necessarily A then, as the moderns would say, it is A in every possible situation. But then, with respect to being A it is the same in every possible situation, so it is both actually and immutably A . The converse is more problematic. For one thing, if (mere) difference is not enough for change, if there is a way for something which is A to be non- A without any change, then immutability is not enough for necessity.¹⁰

Change seems linked with time. As a first approximation we might say that something changes only if the way it is at one time is different at one time from the way it is at another. If this is right then if immutability is crucial for necessity there is an intimate link between necessity and time.

Some putative connections among mutability, possibility and truth are reflected in a version of an argument for Fatalism which has gripped philosophical minds for at least a couple of millennia. Suppose a sentence about the future, say, "There will not be a last moment of time," is true. Then the claim "It is true that there will not be a last moment of time" is itself already true and it is too late to prevent its once having been true. But it seems that if this claim is true then it will remain true. Nothing can make it the case that it both is true now but is false at some later time. So if nothing can prevent its being true now nothing can prevent its being immutable. That is something of a relief—but it is also something of a mystery. If no power will in fact end time, does that really entail that there *could not* be such a power?

Arguments like this—which bears some relation to Aristotle's in *De interpretatione* 9 and Auriol's in *I Sent.*, d. 39—are frequently used to present the patient hearer with a dilemma: either grant that we have no more power over the future than over past and

10 There is much that is unclear about this Principle. For example, one might wonder whether it must be x which changes. Could it be that an x which is A can be $\neg A$ even though it cannot change because something else can change and so a relational feature of x changes? No doubt, say I, and say I that medievals would also have said. Aristotle had already distinguished active from passive powers, but even if we allow extrinsic change to count as change Auriol's Principle still has bite, as we shall see.

present or grant that some claims about the future—those over the truth of which we do have power—are, as of yet, neither true nor false.

One thing we should note right away is that it is not mere immutability which underwrites these arguments. Immutability just guarantees that things will not be different ways at different times and that a sentence expressing how things are will not have different truth-values at different times; it does not determine which truth-value a sentence has at any time. On the other hand, things are only necessarily a certain way if they are that way.

What purports to close this gap in the Aristotle and Auriol arguments is bivalence. Auriol, for example, claims that, for any p , since we can infer from “It is true that p ” and “It is immutable that p ” that it is necessarily true that p , and from “It is false that p ” and “It is immutable that p ” that it is necessarily false that p , then if we are also given that it is necessary that either it is true that p or it is false that p then either it is necessarily true that p or it is necessarily false that p .

In fact, however it is at least questionable whether bivalence by itself is enough to get us from immutability to necessity. To see why, let us consider the position worked out by William Ockham.

Ockham agrees with Auriol in attributing the view Auriol himself accepts to Aristotle but Ockham does not accept it *in propria persona*. Instead he draws a distinction between sentences which are really (*secundum rem*) about the present or past and those which are only verbally (*secundum vocem*) about the present and past. He claims that Auriol’s principle applies only to those sentences which are really about the present or past. If p is a sentence about the future in the sense that its truth conditions include situations which have not yet come to pass, then, according to Ockham, the claim that p is true is itself not really about the present even though, since its main verb is present-tensed, it is verbally about the future. Furthermore, claims Ockham, since “ p is true” is not really about the present if p itself is contingent then so is “ p is true.” But Ockham admits that sentences like “Time will never end” are immutable and, hence, so are sentences like “It is true that time will never end.” How can they be true and immutable and yet contingent? Ockham’s answer is that no contradiction follows from supposing that they are false. Rather what follows is that they neither were, are, nor will be true. Hence there are sentences verbally but not really about the past or present which can have and can always have had different truth-values from those they in fact have.

The intuition behind Ockham’s move is that just as if (say) “The Antichrist will come” is true it is made true not by anything happening now but by the (future) birth of the Antichrist and those things required for it, so “It is true that the Antichrist will come” is made true by that same birth and those same things. Neither sentence says anything about the present. Both make claims about the future. Hence if we suppose “It is true that the Antichrist will come” to be after all false, we are not supposing any difference in the way things are but only in how they will be. Such a supposition

requires us to “take back” the claim that the Antichrist will come, but it does not require us to suppose that anything real is not as it in fact is. Just as right now one can search far and wide and not find the Antichrist so one can search and not find the truth of the claim that the Antichrist will come. In either case there literally is no such thing.

Ockham saves the contingency of the future by denying that truth plus immutability is sufficient for necessity. Rather for necessity it is required that the truth in question express what is really or actually the case. But Ockham does grant that if it is really or actually the case that x is A and if x is immutably A then x is necessarily A . It is actuality plus immutability which yield necessity.

Ockham’s position can be seen as a retrenchment of Auriol’s Principle in the face of Auriol’s own claim that the combination of its unrestricted version and the principle of bivalence lead to fatalism, but it can also be seen as a development of ideas of Grosseteste’s. So can the very different position of John Duns Scotus.

Scotus holds it is evident and indemonstrable that there are contingent truths. He also maintains that if an effect is to be contingent then the activity of the first cause on which that effect depends needs be contingent. He concludes that God, the first cause, acts contingently with respect to everything distinct from God. All of God’s activity is a single eternal act which is God himself. Hence if there is to be contingency God must be able to will something at the very same time he actually wills its contrary. Scotus insists that both God and created free agents have this power. Indeed it is of the essence of free will to have it.¹¹ Scotus is not proposing that an agent can will p and $\sim p$ at the same time, rather he is proposing that an agent willing p (and so who can will p) has a “non-evident power” for willing (and so can will) $\sim p$ at that very time.

Positing this “non-evident power” is a bold move on Scotus’ part because the tradition to which he is heir takes more or less for granted a view like that presented in a treatise on *Obligations* sometimes attributed to William of Sherwood and with which Scotus was familiar.¹² The treatise has it that:

Again a false contingent about the present instant having been posited, it, namely the present instant, should be denied to be. Which is proved thus. Let a be a

¹¹ John Duns Scotus, *Lectura I*, d. 39, ed. Vaticana 17, 497, 4ff.

¹² It is possible that the novelty of this move has been somewhat exaggerated. Stephen Dumont and others have shown that Henry of Ghent advances a doctrine very like Scotus’ claim about the non-evident power of the will in his *Quodlibet X*, q. 10; Dumont has pointed out that he applies it to problems about the Vacuum in *Quodlibet 13*; Susan Brower and Stephen Dumont have argued that he applies it to the Immaculate Conception in *Quodlibet XV*, q. 13. There are related suggestions in Peter John Olivi’s Sentence Commentary. Henrik Lagerlund has recently argued that Richard Campsall rejects the necessity of the present in his *Questiones super Librum Priorum Analeticorum*, dated at least before 1308. Cf. Lagerlund (1999) 91–96.

name of the present instant (a name, I say, which is discrete, not common). Since therefore that you are at Rome is now false, it is impossible that now, or in *a*, it be true. For it cannot be made true except through a motion or a sudden change. It cannot be made true in *a* through a motion because there is no motion in an instant, nor through a sudden change because if there were a sudden change to truth in *a* then it would be a truth in *a*—because when there is a sudden change there is a terminus of the sudden change. Thus it is impossible for this falsehood to be made true in *a*. So, therefore this is true “*a* is not.” Therefore if the falsehood is posited it is necessary to deny that *a* is and this is what the rule says.¹³

To see what this text asserts—and what Scotus is denying in his assertion of the contingency of the present—it is useful to consider the text in the context of Aristotle’s discussion of the relation between potentiality and change.

Aristotle distinguishes several different senses in which items can be ordered as prior and posterior. One of the most familiar and most important is the prior and posterior in time. In his *Physics* Aristotle defines time as the measure of change (*kinêsis*) with respect to prior and posterior and defines change as the actualization of a potentiality as such. This picture ties the ordering of items as prior and posterior in time directly to the potency/act relationship. In a given change potency is prior to act in time. Aristotle also distinguishes several different senses of “possible” in one of which something is possible just in case there is a potency to bring it about. If we marry these two notions we produce a picture according to which to bring about what is possible but not actual requires the actualization of a potentiality which in turn takes time. This is the picture which underlies Auriol’s principle and the observation that the result of a change is always later than the beginning of the change.

Auriol’s Principle and the associated doctrine that time is the measure of change pose serious difficulties for any attempt to suggest that a being acting outside time (God, for example) can do anything other than it does. They also raise difficulties for the suggestion that a being acting at a time can do anything other than it actually does at that time. Both of these sets of difficulties become acute if we also suppose that a being acts freely only if it can do other than it does. This complex of worries was focused by Grosseteste’s example of an angel which exists for a single instant, which was taken over by Scotus in his *Lectura*. Consider a rational creature, an angel, for example, which exists only for an instant during which it is, let us suppose, loving God. The question posed is whether it could be loving God freely.

The argument that the angel could not be loving God freely is that for it to do so it has to have a power to do otherwise, say, to hate God. But, the argument continues,

13 William of Sherwood (?), *Obligaciones*, cod. Paris Nat. Lat. 16617, f. 56v. Quoted in Duns Scotus, ed. Vaticana 17, 498, footnote 2.

there is no power to hate God if it is impossible to actualize that power and it is impossible (at least for a being which acts in time) to actualize a power if that power could not be actualized at any time. The angel in question exists only for an instant and cannot actualize its supposed power when it does not exist so if it has the power to hate God it can actualize it at the very instant it exists. Aristotle's most general definition of the possible is that which, when posited, does not entail an impossibility. Suppose then that we posit that the angel hates God at the very instant it exists and see what follows.

We have already hypothesized that the angel is loving God and we didn't take back that supposition, so we have now supposed that the angel is loving God and that the angel is hating God—and that is a contradiction.

It seems that if we are to suppose that the angel which is loving God can, nonetheless, hate God for that same instant, we have to suppose that the angel can not be doing what it in fact is doing at the very moment it is doing it. That is what Principle A rules out.

Scotus sees this argument clearly and is moved to modify the principle that being other than you actually are requires change. His way of doing this is to take up a device which seems to have appeared in the literature on Book VI of Aristotle's *Physics* and was put to theological use by Henry of Ghent, the device of *signa* or instants of nature.

This device is grounded in another of Aristotle's senses of prior and posterior—what he calls priority and posteriority according to nature or substance. In his *De primo principio*, Scotus himself elaborates the notion this way:

I understand “prior” here in the same sense as did Aristotle when in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics*, [relying] on the testimony of Plato, he shows that the prior according to nature and essence is what may be (*contingit*) without the posterior but not conversely. And this I understand thus: that although the prior may cause the posterior necessarily and therefore not be able to be without it, this, however, is not because it needs the posterior to be (*ad suum esse*). Rather the converse, because even if the posterior is held not to be, nonetheless the prior will be without a contradiction. But it is not so conversely because the posterior needs the prior, which need we can call “dependence” so that we may say that every posterior depends essentially on a prior and not conversely even though the posterior sometimes follows it [the prior] necessarily. Prior and posterior can be said according to substance and species as they are said by others but for precise speech are called prior and posterior according to dependence.¹⁴

In the context of the angel existing only for a single temporal instant Scotus treats an instant of time as divisible into a sequence of instants of nature. The present

¹⁴ *De primo principio* I 8, ed. Wolter, p. 4.

instant can, at a minimum, be regarded as a pair of instants of nature ordered as before and after in nature. The prior is that in which the angel has both the power to love God and the power to hate God and the posterior is that in which the angel has actualized the power to love God. These are prior and posterior in nature because the power to love God is naturally prior to its actualization. Since “in” the instant of time there is an instant of nature (namely the prior of the two) at which the angel has the power to hate God, we can say that the angel has the power to hate God at that instant of time (and could, relative to that “prior” instant of nature, actualize it at the posterior instant of nature) and so that the angel is now free.¹⁵

Scotus thinks that it is because of this ordering of nature within the present instant of time that we can speak of the present as being only contingently the way it is. So, as we might by now expect, Scotus’ response to Auriol’s Principle and to the “Sherwoodian” rule of *Obligations* embodying it is to reject them both.¹⁶

Scotus argues that the present is contingent but he insists that it is determinate and, in at least one explicit discussion of the matter, he insists that, unlike the future, it is actual.¹⁷ In so distinguishing determination from necessitation, he is part of an early fourteenth-century movement which reshaped the terms of the discussion of future contingents.

The contingency of the present, or more precisely, the contingency of what has not “passed into the past,” is a notion which Scotus employs widely. In the human case, he uses it to explain what it is for a human will to be free at a time t —a human will is free at t just in case it has at t the power to do at t other than what it is doing at t . In the divine case Scotus relies on this notion to explain how there can be contingency in the world at all. He argues that since divine causal cooperation is required for everything, and since God is immutable, if God’s activity were not contingent “while” it is happening, nothing would be contingent. There can be no doubt that Scotus does think that at the present moment things could be other than they are. Nevertheless, for Scotus, the alternatives to the present at the present are exactly the actualizations of the potentialities there are at present. Unless there are the same potentialities at every

15 In fact Scotus thinks that the power to hate God in this context just is the same power as the power to love God because both just are the will which is a rational power in his sense.

16 This he does baldly, saying merely (*Lectura* I, d. 39, n. 59, ed. Vaticana 17, 499): “This rule is denied. Indeed the art of *obligatio* is well treated by that master without this rule. Hence it does not depend on the truth of this rule.”

17 For the claim that according to Aristotle the present is determinate and that the future is not and Scotus’ apparent acceptance of it, cf. *Lectura* I, d. 39, n. 69, ed. Vaticana 17, 502–503. For Scotus’ rejection of the claim that the future *is* actual, cf. *Lectura* I, d. 39, n. 28, ed. Vaticana 17, 487. Richard Cross has argued that this does not represent Scotus’ considered opinion; cf. Cross (1998) 244 and the work referenced there. I do not share Cross’ view.

time, what is possible will vary from time to time and so time and modality will not yet have completely separated.

Moreover, although he rejects the necessity of the present, Scotus thinks that the past is necessary. For example, in his *Lectura* I, d. 40, q. unica he considers the objection that:

what passes into the past (*transit in praeteritum*) is necessary—as the Philosopher wishes in Book VI of the *Ethics* approving the saying of someone who says that “this alone is God not able to make, that what is past is not past.”¹⁸

He replies:

to the first argument, when it is argued that that which passes into the past is necessary, it is conceded. And when it is argued that this one’s being predestined passes into the past it should be said that it is false. For if our will were always to have the same volition in the same immobile instant, its volition would not be past but always in act. And thus it is of the divine will which is always the same. ... Hence [with respect to] what is said in the past tense—that God has predestined—there the “has predestined” joins (*copulat*) the now of eternity as it coexists with a now in the past.¹⁹

This is a bit gnomic but seems to say both that there is no past for God—whose act is like an eternal present—and that while that act has coexisted with our past it does not share the necessity of our past. On the other hand, the passage also seems to say that what is genuinely past really is necessary. If what is genuinely past is what is past for us this raises a very delicate issue of whether what is in our past is really necessary or not. I know of nowhere where Scotus himself faces this issue clearly.

Thomas Bradwardine does face it and argues that from God’s perspective the distinctions between past, present and future have no modal significance. Hence, as he puts it,

something marvellous can be seen to follow, namely that if God were to cease nothing would be past or future or true or false or possible or impossible, necessary or contingent or able to be. From which the opposite follows, namely, that God and thus something has always been, is, and is going to be, and similarly that all others are able to be through the great omnipotence of God.²⁰

18 *Lectura* I, d. 40, q. un., n. 1, ed. Vaticana 17, 511, 7–10.

19 *Lectura* I, d. 40, q. un., n. 9, ed. Vaticana 17, 512–513.

20 Thomas Bradwardine, *Summa de Causa Dei Contra Pelagium et de Virtute Causarum ad suos Mertonenses libri tres*, I, cap. 14 Cor, p. 209E.

Bradwardine's claim is very strong. He argues that God is the cause both of what in any sense is, and of what in every sense is not. In suggesting that the non-existent requires a cause in the same sense that the existent does, Bradwardine goes at least as far as anyone has ever claimed Descartes goes. Indeed, despite the attention which has been paid to Descartes' doctrine of the creation of the eternal truths, Descartes is no bolder.²¹

By the end of the fourteenth century, there are, thus, already two well-articulated modal pictures available each of which has theoretical and theological advantages. Ockham's rephrasing of the older common view preserves connections between power and possibility and preserves the intuition that the past is "fixed" but has difficulties with the intuition that freedom requires the possibility of doing otherwise at the time of action. Scotus' view seems tailor-made for libertarian accounts of freedom but introduces a novel and difficult conception of power and seems to lead naturally to the view that the past is as contingent as the future.

It is tempting, from our own perspective, which has opened a wide gulf between time and modality, to see the subsequent history of modal notions as the gradual triumph of an updated Scotist view over the older one defended by Ockham. However, there is reason to think that the history did not go this way and that the 17th century—including such major figures as Gassendi, Boyle and Descartes—focused rather on the notion of immutability. What seems to have pushed in this direction was concern about the relation between natural necessity and God's will.

The fourteenth century saw a renewed emphasis on the power of God and with it a new concern to reconcile this power with a justified confidence in there being a natural order. Thus the fourteenth-century theologian Walter Chatton, in response to an objection that a position like that which Bradwardine developed out of Scotus' ideas would undermine science, writes:

To the second objection, I also concede the conclusion that we would not have such certainty but that God, who is able to cause a vision without the presence of the thing, would be able to cause in us one act by which we would judge it to be in reality otherwise than it is. However it is compatible with this that we may have such certainty that we can not be kept in invincible error through natural causes.²²

Chatton here speaks of what we might consider to be a conditional natural science. God can deceive us invincible but natural causes cannot. Hence we can be sure that our science is perfectible unless supernatural forces intervene. This is the same line worked

21 Here I take issue with Prof. Knuuttila; cf. Knuuttila (1999).

22 Walter Chatton, *Reportatio et Lectura super Sententias*, prol., q. 2, a. 1, ed. Wey, 92, 179–183.

out in some detail by John Buridan. Faced with the same problems, Buridan concludes that all of our natural science carries, so to speak, a little proviso—"unless God deceives us."²³

The extension, by Bradwardine and by others, Gregory of Rimini for example, of the Scotist view to the conclusion that it is possible for God right now to make it that the world be and always have been different from the way it in fact is raises an acute question about how the stability of the natural order is to be assured and science possible.

Descartes, of course, maintains that it is the essential goodness of God which justifies our confidence in the stability of the natural order. This position had, however, already been criticized by fourteenth-century theologians like Robert Holkot, who pointed out that there was no guarantee that the goodness of God was incompatible with God deceiving us—provided such deception was itself for our own good.²⁴ Mersenne knew of such challenges, raises them in the Second Objections and gets from Descartes what seems to be only bluster.²⁵

We are inclined to think that there is a natural order and that we have access to it. God could deceive us about either aspect of this. We think that only God could do this but God could deceive us about that as well. What grounds have we then for thinking that we are not deceived and that there is a natural order? If God's goodness does not ground such confidence, what does?

The other available answer seems to have been God's promise. Thus Robert Holkot explains that we can believe in the final judgment because God has told us to do so. The model here is Yahweh's covenant with the people of Israel. It is not a bargain between humans and God but a free gift of God's. God has arranged a world for us and has agreed both to keep it going and to enable us to keep informed. There is no necessity in this, we simply have God's word for it.

This covenantal tradition has its serious beginnings, it would seem, in the 14th century and is closely connected with the metaphysical and theological movements around Ockham and the movement in natural science around John Buridan. Buridan

23 Cf. Zupko (2001) and (2003) ch. 12 and the references therein.

24 Cf. Robert Holkot, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum quaestiones* II, q. 2, a. 8.

25 Descartes, *Second Replies*, AT VII 125–126, CSM II 89–90: "Fourth you say that God cannot lie or deceive. Yet there are some schoolmen who say he can. Gabriel [Biel], for example, and Ariminensis [Gregory of Rimini], among others, think that in the absolute sense God does lie, that is communicate to men things which are opposed to his intentions and decrees. Thus he unconditionally said to the people of Ninevah, through the prophet 'Yet forty days and Ninevah shall be destroyed.' And he said many other things which certainly did not occur, because he did not mean his words to correspond to his intentions or decrees. Now, if God hardened Pharaoh's heart and blinded his eyes, and if he sent upon his prophets the spirit of untruthfulness, how do you conclude that we cannot be deceived by him?"

was perhaps the most influential physicist of his day and the founder of a school of physics at Paris whose influence was to be felt for centuries. The metaphysicians and theologians around Ockham were contemporaries of the great flowering of English physics whose most visible part was the Merton school and which was still being studied as the authoritative texts when Galileo went to school. We can thus expect that the covenantal tradition had a considerable and long-lasting influence despite the fifteenth-century backlash which saw the Buridians and Ockhamists branded as Epicureans who could not provide an adequate foundation for science.

But perhaps we can say more. We shall soon see how Descartes (although he is one who speaks of God making the eternal truths as a king does laws) insists that we can ground the knowability of nature in the perfection of God. But there were significant seventeenth-century thinkers on the other side.

In "Providence and Divine Will in Gassendi's Views on Scientific Knowledge," Margaret Osler has argued that Gassendi is to be seen as within what she calls the "voluntarist" camp, that is the camp of those who see natural law as grounded in God's will. Excerpting a section in Book I of the *Syntagma*, she quotes Gassendi writing:

God is radically distinct from his creation; and we cannot know him, since, lacking any imperfections, he is not like any word we might use to describe him. ... One fact we can know about God, however, is that he is free from any necessity or limits ... there is nothing in the universe which God cannot destroy, nothing which he cannot produce, nothing which he cannot change, even into its opposite qualities ...²⁶

This is very much the God of Ockham and d'Ailly but also, so far, the God of Descartes. But it is a feature of Descartes' God that he is immutable in such a way as to guarantee an immutable natural order. Gassendi, however, writes:

... the power of God ... is either absolute, also described as that by which God accomplishes actions strange to the natural order, or of the kind which we usually call miracles; or it is ordinary, otherwise called that by which God accomplishes actions conforming to the natural order.²⁷

Here Gassendi explicitly invokes the *potentia absoluta* not merely as a way of allowing that God could do what God does not but as a way of accounting for some of what God does do. Gassendi's God is a fiddler and a meddler far from the immutable God of Descartes and very close to the Buridian tradition.

²⁶ Gassendi, *Syntagma*, *Opera omnia* 1, 308, transl. Osler (1983) 553.

²⁷ Gassendi, *Disquisitio*, ed. Rochot, 562, transl. Osler (1983) 554, footnote 23.

Nor is Gassendi alone. Boyle too seems a likely candidate. Here is a passage quoted by Funkenstein:

But if we grant, with some modern philosophers, that God has made other worlds besides this of ours, it will be highly probable, that he has there displayed his manifold wisdom in productions very different. ... In these ... we may suppose that the original fabric, or frame, into which the omniscient architect at first contrived the parts of matter, was very different from the structure of our system; besides this ... we may conceive, that there may be a vast difference between the subsequent phenomena and productions observable in one of these systems. ... And the laws of the propagation of motion among bodies may not be the same with those ... in our world.²⁸

Here Boyle speaks of God making many very different worlds (contrast with Descartes suggestion in *Le Monde* that the same laws would govern any world) and elsewhere he writes:

if we consider God as the author of the universe, and the free establisher of the laws of motion, whose general concurrence is necessary to the conservation and efficacy of every particular physical agent, we cannot but acknowledge that, by with-holding his concurrence, or changing these laws of motion, which depend perfectly upon his will, he may invalidate most, if not all the axioms and theorems of natural philosophy, these supposing the course of nature ... It is a rule in natural philosophy, that *causae necessariae semper agunt quantum possunt*, but it will not necessarily follow from thence, that the fire must necessarily burn Daniel's three companions, or their clothes, that were cast by the Babylonian king's command into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, when the author of nature was pleased to withdraw his concurrence to the operation of the flames, or supernaturally to defend against them the bodies, that were exposed to them.²⁹

Here Boyle speaks in the same language we would expect of Ockham or d'Ailly. God is the free author of nature who can change its laws as freely as he made them.

Much has been made in recent years of this covenantal tradition particularly by William Courtenay and Francis Oakley. That there was such a tradition seems very hard to deny and that many key figures from Ockham through Boyle, Gassendi and

²⁸ Robert Boyle, *Works* 3, 139, in Funkenstein (1986) 193.

²⁹ Boyle, *Some Considerations about the Reconcilableness of Reason and Religion*, ed. Birch, *Works* 4, 161–162.

Locke speak freely of God imposing laws upon nature as a king imposes laws upon his subjects seems equally hard to deny. Courtenay and Oakley are right, I am convinced, to emphasize that it is in this tradition that the notion of law of nature receives its full development. There is an alternative tradition of natural law which envisages laws of nature as somehow immanent in the world, a sort of Stoic vision, but it is the minor rather than the major movement.³⁰

Yet it is also true that it is hard to find evidence that God has promised to maintain an order of nature and to give us access to it. There is a fair bit of biblical support for the idea that God has promised to save those who follow him and thus to provide what is necessary for salvation, but exactly how maintaining an accessible natural order is supported by this is far from clear.

Thus there is an important sense in which the covenantal tradition hangs in mid-air. According to its picture, if Nature exists it is by God's free agreement. Whether that agreement is forthcoming is not entirely clear.

I would like to suggest that Descartes was concerned about this. He agreed with the covenantal tradition that God imposed a natural order on both creation and our understanding of it in the way a King, had he only the power, would impose laws on his subjects. But Descartes' appeal to the goodness of God to ground the stability of nature, even if it survives the doubts of the likes of Holkot, will not suffice if God's goodness could manifest itself differently at different times. We need something deeper—the essential immutability of God. It is on this, I suggest, that Descartes, in the end, grounds both his physics and his picture of modality.

Let me start by reminding you of a few of Descartes' texts. Here is one from the Fifth Replies (to Gassendi):

You say that you think it is "very hard" to propose that there is anything immutable and eternal apart from God. You would be right to think this if I was talking about existing things, or if I was proposing something as immutable in the sense that its immutability was independent of God. But just as the poets suppose that the Fates were originally established by Jupiter, but that after they were established he bound himself to abide by them, so I do not think that the essences of things, and the mathematical truths which we can know concerning them, are independent of God. Nevertheless I do think that they are immutable and eternal, since the will and decree of God willed and decreed that they should be so. Whether you think this is hard or easy to accept, it is enough for me that it is true.³¹

30 This claim is at least controversial. For an opposing view, cf. Ruby (1986).

31 *Fifth Replies*, AT VII 380, CSM II 261.

Descartes is here characterizing the eternal truths—such items as that the interior angles of a triangle sum to 180 degrees. He characterizes them as eternal and immutable and insists that their immutability and eternity derives from the immutability of God. He does not here use any word naturally translated as “necessary,” thus, faced with this text alone one might stop short of admitting that everything eternal and immutable is necessary. But there is more.

The fullest discussion of the immutability of God in the Cartesian corpus comes in the *Entretien* with Burman. The text itself is remarkable and is, I suggest, a good guide to Descartes’ views even if we cannot have confidence that every word is his. It in turn begins with a text from the *Principles*:

Principles of Philosophy, Book I, art. 23:

We are not able to conceive in what way he does that but we understand only that he does it. However, that we may conceive otherwise arises from this that we may consider God as [if he were] a man who effects everything through many different actions as we do. But if we attend well to the nature of God we will see that we are not able to understand him other than as effecting everything through one action.

O. It seems, however, that this cannot be so since we are able to conceive some things decreed by God as not done and as changeable—which [things] thus are not done by a single action of God and are not God himself since they can be separated from him or at least they could have been as, for example, what was decreed concerning the creating of the world and similar things—to which he was plainly indifferent.

R. Whatever is in God is not really different from God himself, indeed it is God himself. Moreover, in as much as those things decreed by God which have already been made are concerned, in them God is plainly (*plane*) immutable nor is it possible that that be conceived otherwise metaphysically. However, in as much as ethics and religion are concerned, in those things the opinion that God is mutable has value on account of the prayers of humans for no one would pray to God if he wrote or if he were persuaded that God is immutable. However, that that difficulty may be removed and the immutability of God be reconciled with the prayers of men, it should be said that God is indeed plainly immutable and has decreed from eternity that this which I seek will be given to me or will not be given to me but, however, has decreed it thus that at the same time he would have decreed to give this to me through my prayers [with] me at the same time praying and living well—so that it is for me to pray and to live well if I wish to obtain that from God. Thus, indeed, in that related to ethics, the author, examining the truth of the matter, sees himself to agree with Gomarius and not with Arminius nor even with the Jesuits. Metaphysically, however, it

is not able to be understood otherwise than that God is plainly immutable. Nor does he agree (*refert*) those decrees to have been able to be separated from God—for this hardly ought to be said. For although God may be indifferent to everything, yet necessarily he decreed thus because he willed the best necessarily even though by his will he made that best. Necessity and indifference ought not here be separated in God's decrees and although he acts maximally indifferently at the same time he acts maximally necessarily. Then even if we conceive those things decreed to have been separated from God, yet we only conceive this in a *signum* and moment of reason which implies a certain mental distinction of the decrees of God from God himself but not a real [distinction] so that as those very things decreed could not be separated from God neither are they posterior to him or thus distinct, nor could God be without them. Thus it may be evident enough in what way God effects everything by one action. But this is not to be known by our reasoning and we ought never to merely indulge or permit to ourselves to submit the nature and operations of God to our own reason.³²

32 Conversation with Burman, 16 April 1648, AT V 165–166: “PRINCIPIA PHILOSOPHIÆ, LIB. I, Art. 23: *ita ut per unicam* . . .

Quomodo id fiat, concipere non possumus; sed id solum intelligimus. Quod autem aliter concipiamus, inde oritur, quia Deum tanquam hominem consideramus, qui per multas et diversas actiones, ut nos, omnia efficit. Sed si bene advertamus ad naturam Dei, videbimus nos eum aliter intelligere non posse, quam ut per unicam actionem omnia efficiat.

O.—Videtur autem id esse non posse, cum aliqua Dei decreta possimus concipere tanquam non facta et mutabilia, quæ ergo unica Dei actione non fiant et ipse Deus non sint, cum ab eo separari possint aut saltem potuerint, ut, exempli gratia, decretum de creando mundo et similia, ad quod plane indifferens fuit.

R.—Quicquid in Deo est, non est realiter diversum a Deo ipso, imo est ipse Deus. Quantum autem ad ipsa Dei decreta quæ jam facta sunt attinet, in iis Deus est plane immutabilis, nec metaphysice id aliter concipi potest. Quantum autem ad ethicam et religionem attinet, in ea invaluit illa opinio Deum esse mutabilem, propter preces hominum; nemo enim Deum precatus esset, si scriret aut sibi persuaderet eum esse immutabilem. Ut autem illa difficultas tollatur, et Dei immutabilitas cum hominum precibus reconcilietur, dicendum est Deum esse quidem plane immutabilem, et ab æterno decrevisse hoc quod peto se mihi daturum aut non daturum, sed tamen ita decrevisse, ut simul decreverit hoc mihi dare per meas preces, et me simul precante et bene vivente, adeo ut mihi precandum et bene vivendum sit, si quid a Deo obtinere velim. Et ita quidem id ethice se habet, in quo auctor examinans rei veritatem vidit se convenire cum Gomaristis, et non cum Arminianis, nec etiam cum Jesuitis inter suos. Metaphysice autem id aliter intelligi non potest, quam Deum esse plane immutabilem. Nec refert illa decreta a Deo separari potuisse; hoc enim vix dici debet: quamvis enim Deus ad omnia indifferens sit, necessario tamen ita decrevit, quia necessario optimum voluit, quamvis sua voluntate id optimum fecerit; non deberet hic sejungi necessitas et indifferentia in Dei decretis, et quamvis maxime indifferenter egerit, simul tamen maxime necessario egit. Tum etiamsi concipiamus illa decreta a Deo separari potuisse, hoc tamen tantum concipimus insigne et momento rationis; quod mentalem quidem distinctionem decretorum Dei ab ipso

Here Descartes (or Burman following what he takes to be *ad mentem Descartes*) uses a very traditional scholastic apparatus to make the point that while God's decrees are posterior to God in some sense and so can in a way be conceived as separate from him, they cannot and never could have been really separated from him. Even the language is striking because it relies on the idea of *signa* or moments of reason—a doctrine which to anyone familiar with the tradition would have suggested Scotus' and Henry of Ghent's use of *signum* and Scotus' doctrine of instants of nature.

Similar ideas appear in article 145 of *The Passions of the Soul*. There Descartes writes that of the two remedies for vain desires for things which do not depend on us

[t]he second is that we should often reflect upon divine Providence, and represent to ourselves that it is impossible that anything should happen otherwise that has been determined by this Providence from all eternity; thus it is like a fate or immutable necessity which must be opposed to Fortune in order to destroy it, as a chimera arising only from error in our understanding. For we can desire only what we consider in some way to be possible and we can consider possible things which do not depend on us only ... insofar as we judge that they might happen and that something like them has happened at other times. Now this opinion is founded only on our failure to know all the causes that contribute to each effect. For when something we have considered to depend on Fortune does not happen, this shows that one of the causes necessary to produce it was lacking, and consequently that it was absolutely impossible.³³

Once one focuses on this idea of immutability certain other texts appear in a new light as well. Consider, for example, the famous passage from the *Meditations* in which Descartes announces that he cannot doubt his own existence.

So after considering everything very thoroughly, I must finally conclude that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind. But I do not yet have a sufficient understanding of what this "I" is, that now necessarily exists.³⁴

Deo infert, sed non realem, adeo ut reipsa illa decreta a Deo separari non potuerint, nec eo posteriora aut ab eo distincta sint, nec Deus sine illis esse potuerit: adeo ut satis tamen pateat, quomodo Deus unica actione omnia efficiat. Sed hæc nostris ratiociniis noscenda non sunt, et nunquam tantum nobis indulgere aut permittere debemus, ut Dei naturam et operationes nostræ rationi subjiciamus."

33 Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, art. 145, AT XI 438, transl. Voss, 98–99.

34 *Meditationes de prima philosophia* II, AT VII 25: "Adeo ut, omnibus satis superque pensitatis, denique statuendum sit hoc pronuntiatum, *Ego sum, ego existo*, quoties a me profertur, vel mente concipitur, necessario esse verum. Nondum vero satis intelligo, quisnam sim ego

The word *necessario* appears twice in this passage and I think it is most naturally read not as characterizing the relationship between my putting forward the proposition that I exist and its being true but as characterizing the truth of the proposition itself. If this is right then Descartes is claiming that there is a sense in which “I exist” on the occasions on which it is uttered or put forward is a necessary truth.

What is that sense? Descartes explicitly links the two occurrences of *necessario* with temporal words. “I exist” is necessarily true whenever it is uttered or thought. There is an I which now necessarily exists.

We can make good sense of Descartes’ claims here if we suppose that what he has in mind is this: When I utter “I exist” it is always at a particular time—a particular “now.” When a given time is present, what is the case at that time is necessarily the case at that time. It is not, of course, necessarily the case at every time—Descartes can cease to exist. But if he does then it is at another time that he does not exist, not at the time of utterance. In short, if we take Descartes’ “I exist” to mean “I exist now,” and if we take what it expresses to be a claim wholly about the time of that now, and if we suppose that necessity here is immutability, then what Descartes says comes out just right. In the words of the Latin tag taken from Aristotle “Omne quod est, quando est, est necessarie.”

Descartes thinks that the necessity of the eternal truths is a matter of their eternal immutability and, I have just suggested, that the necessity of the *cogito* is grounded in its relative immutability—the fact that it cannot cease to be true while being thought or uttered—but there is another side of Descartes’ conception of necessity—that which links possibility and conceivability.

I have argued elsewhere for a very close connection between possibility and objective reality in Descartes.³⁵ My earlier argument was that Descartes takes it as axiomatic (for example in the Rationes appended to his Replies to the Second Objections to his Meditations) that possible or contingent existence is contained in every idea of a thing other than God and that necessary and perfect existence is contained in the idea of God (AT VII, 166). Thus if an idea is *of* a thing that thing possibly exists. But if an idea is of a thing, the objective reality of that idea is the thing itself as it is objectively in the intellect. This suggests the equation of the objective reality of an idea with the objective existence of its object and of the objective existence of the object with its possible existence. On this view the objective reality of an idea of something is just the possible existence of that thing.

ille, qui jam necessario sum; deincepsque cavendum est ne forte quid aliud imprudenter assumam in locum mei, sicque aberrem etiam in ea cogitatione, quam omnium certissimam evidentissimamque esse contendo.”

35 Normore (1986).

If one accepts this line of argument then everything we can *really* think about is possible. This does not entail that it is possible that there be chimeras or round squares because, as Descartes is at pains to make clear, to “think” such things is just to combine ideas which really are of things in such a way as to produce a complex idea which has no objective reality beyond that of its parts. Such ideas are *of* nothing more than what their parts are *of*.

Now if we accept that anything we can really think about is possible and we accept, for example, that the past is necessary in the sense that it immutably was so and what was the case cannot not have been the case, then it follows that we cannot really think that some aspect of the past be not as it was. We can, perhaps, suppose it or feign it but we cannot have an idea that is properly “of” it. We cannot, for example, really think that Descartes did not exist when he in fact did.

Before this thought meets your incredulous stare let me try to make it more plausible. Advocates of direct reference accounts of proper names usually admit that while Schliemann may have thought he could think both that Troy had existed and that Troy had not, there is a real puzzle about how that could be so since there are only two cases: if Troy is a genuine name then it goes back to a causal contact with Troy (whatever that turns out to be) and so there must have been such a thing and if “Troy” does not trace back in this way then it is no name at all. It seems then that to entertain seriously both the claim that Troy existed and the claim that it did not Schliemann must have been uncertain whether “Troy” was a name.

Descartes faces related issues. For example, he has an idea-of-cold which he cannot tell to be of cold or not. Only when his idea is clear and distinct can he really tell what he is thinking about. Fortunately for him (and perhaps for the rest of us) he thinks his idea of himself is clear and distinct and so he can tell on the occasion of thinking “I exist” not merely that whatever he is then thinking is the case but *what* it is that is the case. Descartes argues in the Third Meditation that his idea of himself is of a finite being requiring a cause, and he is eventually led by reasoning which we have to suppose he thinks clear and distinct to the conclusion that that cause is an all-powerful and immutable God. Here then his idea of himself while distinct from his idea of God involves that idea in such a way that he can prove God’s existence from it and so conclude that it is not possible that he exist and God not.

Unlike its more famous cousin in the Third Meditation, which relies on the Mediator being a mind with a rather special idea of God, this proof is entirely general. Any finite being will bear the same relation to God which Descartes finds himself bearing—that is, God is its total and efficient cause.

Now since the idea of existence is not contained in that of any finite creature there is no way we could know without experience that a finite creature exists or that a categorical truth about such a creature obtains. It is plausible to think that in our own case the *cogito* does give us certainty that such a thing exists and such a truth obtains,

and the immutability of God gives us grounds (even certain grounds) for concluding both that having obtained it will not cease to have obtained (though, alas, in the absence of confidence in the immortality of the soul it may cease to obtain) and that it was, as Descartes stresses in article 145 of the *Passions* and in the Interview with Burman, “fated” from all eternity that it would obtain. The certainty in our own case derives from the combination of our certainty about our own existence and the immutability of God. The immutability of God can be relied on just as much in cases having to do with others and with material objects, but in those cases our epistemic situation is different. In the case of other minds it seems we have no such certainty. Whether we have such certainty in the case of matter depends on how one understands Descartes’ position on the certainty with which we know there is an external world. But however that goes it is necessarily the case, and we can know it is the case, that if a contingent truth obtains, the immutability of God ensures it will always have obtained.

The guarantee we have here is in many ways like that which we have in the case of the eternal truths. God’s immutability guarantees the eternal truths because having caused the true natures God, by being immutable, guarantees their immutability. What is special about the eternal truths is that God has also fashioned our minds so that not only cannot we clearly and distinctly conceive them to be other, we often cannot see even obscurely and indistinctly any way they could be other. In the case of those necessary truths which do not flow directly from the true natures, we can begin to think they might be different (though that thought is, as Descartes puts it, only a chimera arising from error in our understanding) and only our confidence gained from experience that they are as they are together with our certainty of God’s immutability shows us their necessity. In the end, all necessity (and, as Simo Knuuttila has stressed, all conceivability) is grounded in the free decisions and the immutable nature of God.

If this picture of Descartes is at all plausible it suggests that the picture of necessity as actuality plus immutability was very much alive in the seventeenth century and among its best philosophers at that. This does not entail that the ideas developed by Henry of Ghent, Scotus and others fell on deaf ears or stony ground but only that the interplay between that tradition and its rivals was richer and more complex than we have yet fully appreciated.

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Spinoza and Hume on Pride and Self-Knowledge

I

This paper reflects on some aspects of the problem of self-cognition in the context of two famous early modern naturalist projects of mastering the passions, those of Spinoza and Hume. Both have difficulties with individuation in general and with accounting for an individual self in particular. There are many interesting similarities in their accounts of the mechanics of the mind and of the passions too. Among some of the more striking ones is the role they give to the passion of pride. The object of pride is precisely the self, and the importance both accord to it appears proportional to the difficulties they encounter in accounting for a permanent individual self. Who, in the end, is the slave of the passions whose mechanisms they so penetratingly reveal, and who is the agent seeking to master them?

Given Hume's deconstruction of reason as the locus of a true self, to say nothing about the self as an object of awareness that he reduces to a set of ever-changing impressions or ideas, one wonders whether calling reason a slave is not already giving it more substance than it can have? The same question can be posed to Spinoza, whose whole project famously is to free us, presumably our individual selves, from the bondage of passions. While the problem of personal identity in Hume has been much discussed, starting with his own remarks about having failed to account for it, the same cannot be said about Spinoza, who, moreover, shows no signs of even worrying about it.

In this paper that focuses on their accounts of pride more space is given to Spinoza than to Hume. The object of the passion of pride is self but the self it turns our attention to hides rather than reveals the true self from a proper cognitive grasp, and it is not clear how the latter—the true self—is related to the one pride and shame make us aware of. In spite of so many commonalities in their philosophical psychology, however, some of which are briefly listed below, Spinoza's view on this point, as I will argue, is in stark contrast to Hume's account where there is no self to cognize beyond the one our passions make us conscious of and whose pleasures and pains we are so concerned about. Instead of drawing out the consequences of his own theory Spinoza remains in the camp of the ancients in so far as his proposed remedy to the mastery of passions is concerned, whereas Hume seems more consistent in his commitment to the new kind of naturalism they both favor.

I start by outlining some of the more striking commonalities in their views and their possible Cartesian background. I then look at Spinoza's concepts of activity and passivity and how they are reflected in his account of the passion of pride as distorting our knowledge of self and our true actions, before turning to Hume's explanation of the mechanics of the passions and imagination.

2

Spinoza and Hume are naturalists, and both fully endorse the mechanistic philosophy of nature. Neither of them are reductionists, however, for while being opposed to Descartes's metaphysics, they commit themselves to a strict methodological dualism, according to which thoughts or perceptions can only be explained in terms of other thoughts or perceptions, and not in terms of the bodily movements that may have occasioned them. Hume's doctrine of impressions as original perceptions—at the origin of all other perceptions or ideas—together with his refusal to attempt a physicalistic account of them, is anticipated by Spinoza's doctrine that ideas can only be explained by other ideas. Had Hume learnt from Spinoza's criticism of Descartes's mind-body interaction thesis, or drawn similar conclusions on his own? Where Spinoza declares that there is only one underlying substance differently expressed in distinct attributes, Hume, who does not care for metaphysical speculations about substances, writes blithely "in the mind or the body, whatever you want to call it," yet takes great care to avoid explanations of mental and moral phenomena in terms of bodily or physical causes and events.

Moreover, Hume's distinction between two kinds of perceptions, impressions and ideas, parallels Spinoza's distinction between affections and ideas, and his idea-copies of impressions are very like Spinoza's ideas of affections. Important similarities can be found also in their accounts of imagination and memory. Impressions remain in our memory when not overruled by other impressions and can be activated and combined by the imagination with other resembling impressions. Their ideas, Hume argues, can be combined on the basis of resemblance, contiguity and causal relations. Hume's associationist psychology is on all its main points anticipated by Spinoza in the *Ethics* Parts Two and Three.¹

1 References to Hume are to the new standard edition David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. D.F. Norton & M.J. Norton (2000). For Spinoza's *Ethics* I have used Benedict Spinoza, *Ethique*, ed. C. Appuhn (1953), and for the English quotes mostly *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, ed. and transl. E. Curley (1985), but I follow current practice in referring to the text by number of Part of the *Ethics* and proposition. Whenever the translation differs from Curley's it is my own. Compare Hume's *Treatise* T. 1.1.1–3 with Spinoza's *Ethics*, e.g., E2P17C–E2P18.

The list can be prolonged, but I will mention only points directly relevant for my subject. Among them are their accounts of belief as involving assent to ideas or images vivacious or forceful enough so they cannot be resisted and, related to this, their rejection of the will as an independent and free mental faculty of assent. Actions follow upon our strongest motive—or desire—with the same unflinching necessity and regularity as, in Hume's vivid and unusual illustration, the head rolls off the death-sentenced prisoner once the guillotine is set in action.² As to the self, which Descartes located in the immaterial mind and strongly associated with the will, of which he took us to have direct control and immediate awareness, Hume dissolves into "the set of its related ideas,"³ while Spinoza, who defines the mind as the idea of the human body, takes it to be, like the body that is composed of parts, the sum of the ideas of the parts of the body and of their affections. (E2P14Dem) For since the parts of the body are in continuous flux, transition and change, so that the human body during the course of a lifetime changes all its interrelated parts several times, the ideas of which the mind is composed change accordingly.

There does not seem to be any other locus for the self apart from this changing collection of extended-and-mental modes, more precisely, from the ever changing desire—Spinoza calls it *conatus*—by which (I presume) the ratio of motion and rest that holds them together is preserved. While Hume recognizes and accepts that this is all there is to the idea of a self, and hence that the philosophers' notion of a real substantial self is without foundation, Spinoza still assumes a self as an object of true cognition. But the self that in knowing the truth also knows itself seems to be universal reason, which transcends the individual body and its affections. On this point Spinoza, who stresses the role of adequate knowledge in rendering us active and free, seems to be more in tune with the Ancients, who located the true self in reason, which raises problems about the nature and individuality of the agent, whose freedom and activity it imports so much to Spinoza to salvage.⁴ Hume on the other hand stays true to his naturalist, descriptive project, and invokes no other resources than the ones that his anatomy of the mind and the passions reveal.

The list of commonalities between Spinoza and Hume becomes even more impressive when moving from a comparison of Book I of the *Treatise*, which deals with "Of Understanding," with Part Two of the *Ethics* about "The Nature and Origin of the Human Mind," to that between Book Two of the *Treatise*, "Of Passions," and Part Three of the *Ethics*, "Of the Origin and Nature of Affects" (*De origine et natura*

² T, 2.3.1.17.

³ As noted also by Klever (1990) 91, in comparing Hume's *Treatise* 207 with Spinoza's *Ethics* 2P15. See also Klever (1991) and (1993).

⁴ I discuss them in another paper: "Spinoza on Passions and Self-knowledge: The Case of Pride," in progress.

affectuum), in the light of which I think Hume's account of passions should be read. What strikes one here is the common vision and methodological approach. Spinoza, as we know, wanted to show that the passions follow the "same necessity and Force of nature as all other particular things" and hence that they can be explained as any other natural phenomena. So he proposed to "consider human emotions just as if it were an investigation into lines, planes or bodies." (E3Pref) Hume ends his little "Dissertation of the Passions," which is basically a repetition of Book 2 of the *Treatise* (published 1757), in the very same spirit by stating that his aim had been to show "that, in the production and conduct of the passions, there is a certain regular mechanism, which is susceptible of as accurate a disquisition, as the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy."⁵

Both, of course, have a common source of inspiration in Descartes's *Les Passions de l'âme*. Both develop the idea of quasi-mechanical or, to use Ryle's expression, "para-mechanical" account of the causation of passions with more consistency than Descartes did, picking up on the idea that passions are mental states depending on and caused by mechanical motions in the body. Spinoza defines them as a subclass of affections and Hume as a subclass of impressions—mental states arising directly by actions of other bodies on our body and our bodily organs. What Spinoza calls affections are sensations or feelings of how our bodies are affected (E2Ax6; cf. Ax7), and sensations, as Descartes had shown, although species of ideas or perceptions in his large sense of these terms, are neither clear nor distinct, but constitutionally confused thoughts. They are more or less clear or present to consciousness, expressions on the mental level of physiological states induced by actions of other bodies on our bodily organs, and as they reach consciousness or awareness they do so directly without antecedent sensations or perceptions.

3

Spinoza for his part describes affections as "conclusions without premises" and obviously for the same reason as Descartes calls them obscure and confused, because they are perceptions and images irrupting the mind as a consequence, not so much of what occupied its stage before, as of what goes on in the body. All our ideas and beliefs formed by imagination about our own body and other bodies are derived from our affections, and the same lack of distinctness that characterizes the affections characterizes our ideas

5 David Hume, *Four Dissertations*. This same parallel is noted by Klever (1993) 55. He does not think mechanical is metaphorical and he stresses the difference here with Descartes, whose theory of passions he thinks is not mechanical. I differ. Both Hume and Spinoza pick up on the mechanist account of the passions outlined by Descartes. Klever however is right that the operation of reason in Descartes is not mechanical and that reason can oppose the passions.

of them. Spinoza explicates the matter as follows. “The idea of any mode wherein the human body is affected must involve the nature of the human body together with the nature of the external body.” So whenever we perceive the nature of an external body, i.e., its modes, we perceive at the same time the nature of our own body, of how it is affected. It follows that “the ideas that we have of external bodies indicate the constitution of our own body more than the nature of the external bodies.” (E2P16C2) Taking note of this fact leads to the conclusion that the human mind does not have adequate knowledge of its own body or its component parts, nor of external bodies. (E2P24–26) For the ideas of the affections of the human body, “in so far as they are related only to the human mind, are not clear and distinct, but confused.” Now since the mind does not know (*cognoscere*) itself except to the extent that it perceives affections of the body, and since in perceiving affections of the body it knows neither its own body nor the external bodies adequately, it does not know itself adequately in so far as it is thus affected. We will see shortly how the passions which Spinoza calls passive affects—a subclass of the affections—work to increase our self-ignorance in creating false images of ourselves and our achievements. But let us first look at Spinoza’s take on the distinction between activity and passivity.

The way he draws the distinction, which is crucial to his therapy of passions, is very different from that of any of his predecessors.⁶ Whether a change or process is an action or passion depends, for Descartes as for Aristotle, on the point of view from which it is considered. It is an action when related to the subject who makes it happen. It is a passion when related to the subject who is its terminus.⁷ Descartes applies this distinction in his account of the mind-body interaction: My soul wills and when my body executes the volition I perceive my action as voluntary; I perceive that I myself—my mind or soul—caused it. Reversely, actions, i.e., mechanical movements in the body, are perceived as passions or passive inclinations or evaluations the origin of which remains in the dark, because it is external to my mind. Sometimes the agent and the patient are one and the same subject, as when in willing something I perceive that I will or when executing a voluntary action I experience myself as doing it.

Descartes’s mind-body dualism helps him to keep track of the agent here and to distinguish it from the patient. Such easy solutions do not work in the framework of

6 Strangely enough, it has not been much discussed, and is not very well understood. It is, as a matter of fact, not easy to understand. For recent discussions of active and passive affects, see Rice (1999) and Schrijvers (1999). It is useful to contrast it to Descartes’s distinction between action and passion. Although Spinoza does not directly refer to that distinction, he knew *Les Passions de l’âme*, which he read in Latin translation, well.

7 “Thus, although an agent and patient are often quite different, an action and passion must always be a single thing (*une même chose*) which has these two names on account of the two different subjects to which it may be related.” See *Les Passions de l’âme*, art. 1, AT XI 327, CSM I 328.

Spinoza's monism, where the idea of the mind-body union is turned into that of mind-body identity. The problem is now to determine the agent-subject, and to distinguish it from the patient. How is it that this body of mine, which is the subject of passions, can be seen or see itself also as the agent cause of those states and their effects? This does not seem possible, because the cause of the affections of my body is always some action of external bodies of which we have no independent distinct perceptions. Is it rather, then, that in understanding—truly understanding, which means grasping adequately the concatenation of ideas from which one's present actions follow—one transcends the limited perspective of one's individual body (or self)? In seeing the wider chain of causes and reactions determining the change of state of one's body (or mind), one can see oneself as part of a larger set of things and processes that are so many different expressions of Nature's active power of creation. When we cease to see things from the limited perspective of our own body (this set of interrelated modes which our affections make us conscious of) and its striving to persist in being (which we perceive as our desire), we come to see this body or mind and its striving as one expression among many others of Nature's creative power. This, supposedly, gives one joy, no matter what sufferings one (one's body) happens to undergo at the same time. The joy comes about in two ways: from the contemplation of the true properties of things and their causes, which is pleasing in itself (E2P38), and from the sheer activity of thinking (adequately) which, qua exercise of one's power as a thinking being, gives one joy and thereby strengthens one's power to persist in being.⁸

The doctrine is far from easy to understand. As Spinoza uses the term, there is, strictly speaking, only one kind of action in nature—efficient causation—and there seems to be only one thing which is said to be free (*liber*), namely God (or Nature), who/which is a self-mover (*causa sui*) and acts only from the laws of his/its own nature. (E1Def7 and E1P17) To act is to be the adequate cause of an effect, and God, as the only (self-causing) substance, is the adequate cause of all its attributes and modes. Other things (i.e., modes), whose acts or operations are determined externally, are “moved movers,” hence their acts are constrained.⁹ Yet Spinoza does speak of action, agency and freedom also in referring to the human mind, and in this context adequate causation, which by necessity must be limited, has to do with understanding. We are said to “act when something happens, in us or outside us, of which we are the adequate cause,” and conversely “we are acted on when something happens in us, or something follows from our nature, of which we are only a partial cause.” (E3Def2)

8 The body here being not just any contingent body but a *human* body, the nature of which consists in thinking. (E2Ax1 and 2) Qua thinking or rational its essential striving is to understand. (E4P26.)

9 Cf. Rice (1999), whose reading according to which any increase in the body's power of action, even those caused by passive affects, are sorts of activities, is quite misleading.

By “adequate cause” Spinoza means one “whose effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived through it.” To perceive something clearly and distinctly is to perceive it adequately. Understanding (*intelligere*) consists in adequate perception. So a cause is said to be “partial, or inadequate, if its effect cannot be understood (*intelligi*) through it alone.” (E₃Def1) Qua thinking being, qua minds, we are (necessarily) active when we think adequately. Our mind acts (*agit*) in moving from adequate premises to adequate conclusions. It is being acted on, and so is passive (*patitur*), whenever it has inadequate ideas (E₃P1), and qua finite modes our minds are bound to have inadequate ideas. Activity, when speaking of the human mind, is thus at best partial and relative—a matter of more or less.

Passions properly, on the other hand, are always inadequate ideas, hence passive. They are a subclass of affects, which are a subclass of what Spinoza calls affections (sense perceptions and ideas of the imagination) and include those affects “by which the Body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections.” It is noteworthy that all changes or transitions in the body’s power of acting are not passive. For affects—those transitional states which correspond to what we call emotions today—come in two main kinds in Spinoza’s system: active and passive. An affect or emotion is an action, if and only if we are its adequate cause, which in the light of what was just said means: if and when the affect can be clearly and distinctly understood through ourselves. An affect, whether it increases or inhibits our power of action, is passive—and these are passions in the strict sense of the word—when we are not ourselves their adequate cause (E₃Def3), but suffer them as effects of external causes of which we are partly or wholly ignorant. Being active is entirely a matter of understanding the causes of one’s affections and ideas.¹⁰

4

Let us now turn to Spinoza’s account of pride, which he classifies as a species of love, more particularly as a kind of love of esteem. Emotions are, as mentioned before, transitional states in which a person’s fundamental appetite or striving (*conatus*)—which is called “desire” in so far as one is conscious of it—is affected, and they are all related to desire (*cupiditas*), joy (*laetitia*) and sadness (*tristitia*). (E₃P58Dem) Joy

10 Spinoza’s theory of knowledge, in particular of the highest intuitive cognition developed in *Ethics* Part Five, supposedly provides the keys to answering pressing questions like the following, which go beyond the scope of this paper: How do we—how can we—go from inadequate perception of our passions to clear and distinct understanding of their causes? How do we get from a clear and distinct understanding of their causes to being ourselves the adequate cause of the effects we are suffering? For some light on these matters, see Wilson (1996) and Yovel (1999).

and sadness are nothing but contrary variations in the condition of one's striving to exist, which is called by Spinoza desire in so far as we are conscious of it. (E₃Def aff 1) Joy (sometimes translated as "pleasure" which is the term Hume uses) is "a transition from a state of less perfection to a state of greater perfection," and sadness or pain "a transition from a state of greater perfection to a state of less perfection." All other passions are species of joy and sadness, and they are individuated by the ideas of the different kinds of objects accompanying them, e.g., love is joy accompanied by the idea of an external cause, whereas pride and self-contentment are species of joy accompanied by the idea of an internal thing, i.e., oneself, as a cause. (E₃Def aff 6 and 25 f.) Anything that is thought of as a cause of joy is loved, so if the Self is thought of as a cause of joy it is straight-away loved, giving one joyous perceptions of increased power of being. In making one perceive oneself as worthy of love or esteem, pride affects one's desire to persist in one's being positively and it makes one look for more ideas presenting oneself in a favorable light so that this positive effect could be maintained and strengthened.

Like all passions, but even more so, pride (*superbia*) and its contrary, despondency (*abjectio*), are indications of "a very great ignorance of oneself" and thereby also of a great weakness of mind. (E₄P₅₅ and 56) Spinoza's moral philosophy represents one of the most uncompromising and original forms of ethical determinism, which identifies good and virtue with reason itself. (E₄P₅₂Dem) Weakness of mind (*impotentia animi*) is, from his point of view, the very opposite of virtue. This follows from the definitions of Affects (28 and 29) and is demonstrated in three steps, which for sake of clarity I have numbered:

1. The first foundation of virtue is preserving one's being (by P₂₂C) and doing this from the guidance of reason (by P₂₄). Therefore, he who is ignorant of himself is ignorant of the foundation of all the virtues, and consequently, of all the virtues.
2. Next, acting from virtue is nothing but acting from the guidance of reason (by P₂₄), and he who acts from the guidance of reason must know that he acts from the guidance of reason (by 2P₄₃).
3. Therefore, he who is ignorant of himself, and consequently (as we have just now shown) of all the virtues, does not act from virtue at all, i.e. (as is evident from D8), is extremely weak-minded.
4. And so (by P₅₅) extreme pride or despondency indicate an extreme weakness of mind (*animi impotentiam*), q.e.d. (E₄P₅₆)

Since virtue is defined in terms of power and activity, its absence—vice—consists in powerlessness and passivity. Activity, as we have seen, comes with adequate causation and the only true action of mind is knowledge of the adequate causes of any effects. Pas-

sions are the effects of external causes of which we are generally ignorant, so the stronger our passion, the greater our ignorance, and consequently also our powerlessness. The prouder we are, the farther we are from adequate self-understanding, the greater our impotence and dependency on external causes. I prefer the term “powerlessness” to “weak-mindedness” as a translation of Spinoza’s *animi impotentiam*, not to obscure the profound originality of his view of vice and virtue.

The English term “pride” does not distinguish between two related affects that can be called by that same name. One is simply self-esteem, and is called by Spinoza self-contentment (*acquiescentia in se ipso*)—its contrary is humility (*humilitas*). The other is over-esteem of one self, what some translators, but not always, render as “extreme pride.” Extreme pride (*superbia*), “Is to think higher about oneself out of self love than is justified” (E3Def aff 28). Self-abasement, (*abjectio*) its opposite, is “thinking less of oneself out of sadness (*tristitia*) than justified” (E3Def aff 29).

Pride, for Spinoza as for Descartes, is a species of esteem, more exactly, since it is a passion, a species of over-esteem that lacks any rational foundation. Rationally founded self-esteem, which Descartes calls “Generosity,” is a just appreciation of one’s own power and limitations based on true self-knowledge and constitutes the highest of virtues.¹¹ The counterpart of this passion in Spinoza’s system of the affects is just self-esteem or self-contentment, which is also at the top of his hierarchy of virtues. It consists in the joy that comes from considering oneself and one’s power of action (E3Def aff 25),¹² which, when it is justified, that is, based on true knowledge of one’s own actions, is the highest kind of contentment there can be. (E4P52) So pride, as a species of love of oneself, is based on a false belief of oneself as active and moreover as the author of some estimable action, and is characteristically influenced by how one *imagines* that one’s person or deeds are viewed by others. Spinoza writes:

If someone has done something which he imagines affects others with Joy, he will be affected with Joy accompanied by the idea of himself as cause, or he will regard himself with Joy. If, on the other hand, he has done something which he imagines affects others with Sadness, he will regard himself with Sadness. (E3P30)

Consider the demonstration carefully: In imagining another like ourselves affected by some emotion, we are thereby, by direct imitation, affected with that emotion. (E3P27) So if I do something that I imagine affects you with joy or sadness, say in telling you about my successes or shortcomings, I will thereby, by reflection as it were, be affected with joy or sadness. At the same time, I will think of my self as a cause of your joy or

11 See *Les Passions de l’âme*, art. 149–153, AT XI 443–446.

12 Cf. E3P30S.

sadness, and this will (by reflection) affect me similarly. Thinking of myself as a cause of some positive effect, i.e., thinking of myself as active, will also affect me with more joy:

But since man (by 2P19 and P23) is conscious of himself through the affections by which he is determined to act, then he who has done something which he imagines affects others with Joy will be affected with Joy, together with a consciousness of himself as the cause, or, he will regard himself with Joy, and the converse, q.e.d. (E3P30Dem)

Awareness comes with being affected, and it is through awareness of the affections determining one to act that one becomes conscious of oneself. Activity means increasing one's power, and merely imagining oneself as active also increases one's power, because whatever one imagines, one always imagines as present or actual (E2P17C and S), and the more vividly one imagines something, the more real it will appear to one. As long as other more adequate ideas do not make what one so imagines inconsistent and exclude it, one will take what one vividly imagines as real and react to it accordingly.

Therefore, the more vividly one imagines something the more actual and real it appears to one, and the more effect it has on one's affects. Thus, in imagining myself as in some ways pleasing you or causing you joy—say by my fascinating account of Spinoza's pride—I think of myself as the source of some activity, moreover, as having brought about something to good effect, and this awareness of myself as active and productive gives me such joy that it determines me to seek to please you with greater eagerness. To the contrary, if I were to notice how you are yawning and bored while trying to entertain you, I would think of myself as the cause of your pain and sadness, which not only will be reflected in me automatically but also give me the additional pain of imagining myself as the cause of this unpleasant effect. This would humble me no end and lower my spirits, i.e., diminish my power of acting.

The striving to persist, luckily, is a powerful desire that always inclines one more to imagine one's successes than dwelling on one's actual or imagined failures. This makes one prone also to the illusion of affecting others with joy and makes us a nuisance to one another. For, since (by E3P25)

everyone strives to imagine concerning himself whatever he imagines affects himself with Joy, it can easily happen that one who exults at being esteemed is proud and imagines himself to be pleasing to all, when he is burdensome to all. (E3P30S)

The demonstration of the claim that the more distinctly or vividly one manages to imagine one self and one's own power of acting, the more one rejoices (3P53), is interesting:

A man does not know himself (*se ipsum non cognoscit*) except through affections of his Body and their ideas (by 2P19 and P23). So when it happens that the Mind can consider (*se ipso contemplari*) itself, it thereby supposedly passes to a greater perfection, i.e. (by P11S), to be affected with joy, and with greater joy the more distinctly it can imagine its power of acting, q.e.d. (E3P53Dem)

Note that Spinoza speaks of imagination here and of *imagining* distinctly, not of knowing. The more vividly a man is able to *imagine* himself as praised by others, the greater the joy that he imagines himself to affect others with, which also consequently affects him. (E3P53Dem) By a basic law of human nature the mind always strives “to imagine only those things that posit its power of acting.” The proof of this proposition is as follows:

The Mind’s striving, or power, is its very essence (by P7); but the Mind’s essence (as is known through itself) affirms only what the Mind is and can do, not what it is not and cannot do. So it strives to imagine only what affirms, or posits, its power of acting, q.e.d. (E3P54Dem)

Imagining one’s powerlessness, on the contrary, saddens one, and in saddening one augments one’s weakness and impotence. (E3P55) This, therefore, is something one strives to avoid as much as possible. Just as the joy arising from imagining one causing joy to others is fed by imagining oneself praised by others, so also the sadness is fostered “if we imagine ourselves to be blamed by others.” (E3P55C)

This sadness, accompanied by the idea of our weakness is called humility. But joy arising from considering ourselves, is called self-love or self-contentment (*acquiescentia in se ipso*). And since this is repeated as soon as a man considers his virtues or his power of acting, it also happens that everyone is anxious to tell of his exploits and to show off his powers of body as well as of mind, and that men, for this reason, are a nuisance to one another. (E3P55S)

By natural necessity we strive to bring about “whatever we imagine to be conducive to pleasure” and, conversely, to remove what is imagined to cause pain. (E3P28) Likewise, we strive to do whatever we imagine others will regard with pleasure. This disposition is the basis of vain ambition as well as of kindness and humanity. All these affects, qua passive, depend on imagination, the lowest kind of cognition, which by definition is inadequate. (See E2P17 and ff.)

I will not dwell on the various passive affects and their mechanics that Spinoza derives from these principles in Part Three of the *Ethics*. The main point to be retained is that in being moved by passions one is always at the mercy of external forces, and

even joy, which increases our power, holds us in bondage as long as it is a passive affect, i.e., externally caused. Thus pride (*superbia*), which consists “in thinking more highly of oneself than is just, out of love of oneself,” is really a distortion of self-love (E3Def aff 28), since it is based on false opinions grounded only on imagination concerning one’s own power and achievements. Pride, like humility, which is usually opposed to it, are both qua passive affects contrary to reason, whereas self-contentment alone—the greatest contentment there can be—arises out of reason. (E4P52) For it is “a Joy born of the fact that man considers himself and his power of acting” (by E3Def aff 25), and

a man’s true power of acting, or virtue, is reason itself (by 3P3), which man considers (*contemplatur*) clearly and distinctly (by 2P40 and P43). Now the only things a man, while so considering himself, can perceive clearly and distinctly, i.e., adequately, are those which follow from his power of acting (by 3D2), i.e. (by 3P3), which follow from his power of understanding. (E4P52S)

So true self-esteem and the greatest joy that accompanies it can arise only from understanding. It is not clear how much understanding a man can achieve in this life, or how much that really depends on himself. Understanding itself, as Spinoza notes, is a collective enterprise and requires that we join our efforts with other like-minded rational beings for our common good. (E4P18S) Even so, understanding and the joy it produces do not, it would seem, by themselves take us very far, subject as we are to external forces that by far surpass our own. Since we seek joy above all—for by necessity we seek whatever preserves and increases our power of being—we also necessarily seek whatever can breed our vulnerable self-esteem. No one, Spinoza explains, strives to preserve his being for the sake of any end—we do so simply by acting according to the laws of our own nature. (E4P24Dem and P25) Self-contentment, therefore, “is really the highest thing we can hope for.” But as Spinoza had learnt from his own bitter experience, we also need approval from fellow-human beings to thrive. He writes in one of his most poignant statements:

And because this self-contentment is more and more encouraged and strengthened by praise (by 3P53C), and on the other hand, more and more disturbed by blame (by 3P55C), we are guided by Honour (*Gloria*) most of all and can hardly bear a life in disgrace. (4P52S)

Some hint about how adequate cognition of the external causes overpowering us can help in increasing our own activity can be found in the demonstration of E4P55, where Spinoza proves that humility is no virtue and does not arise from reason. It deserves consideration here because it shows how much Spinoza’s way to the mastery of passions differs from what Hume has to propose. Since humility consists in sadness arising from

the contemplation of one's impotence (E3Def aff 26), it cannot be based on reason, for "in so far as a man knows himself by true reason, he is supposed to understand his own essence." His actual essence is not impotence (being cannot be lack of being) but the *conatus* by which he strives to persist in his own being. (E3P7) According to E3P9Dem "the essence of the mind is constituted by adequate and inadequate ideas, ... so it endeavors to persist in its own being in so far as it has both these kinds of ideas." Its actions however arise from adequate ideas only (E3P3). Adequate ideas are self-evident—they are understood through themselves, and in understanding, one understands that one understands, so has true self-cognition. Inadequate ideas, as we have seen, come with passivity; they can never be clearly and distinctly perceived through the human mind considered apart from the rest of nature. This is where the mistake comes in, for considering the human mind apart from the whole of nature involves negation: it *cannot* be clearly and distinctly perceived through itself independently of the other parts with which it forms a whole. With respect to what does not depend strictly on one's own activity, i.e., adequate ideas, and hence cannot be understood through one's own essence or power alone, one is and remains passive and powerless.

So if a man, in considering himself, perceives some lack of power of his, this is not because he understands himself, but because his power of acting is restrained (as we have shown in 3P55). (E4P53Dem)

By its own power of activity the mind strives to think only of what affirms its power of action, that is, it strives only to understand, to have adequate thoughts. But this *conatus* or striving is counteracted by the number of inadequate ideas which also assert themselves from without, and this restraining of the mind's activity through external causes is experienced as powerlessness and saddens it. How could one, under such circumstances, ever become free? Spinoza, in a truly Stoic spirit, reminds us that there is another way of considering the matter:

But if we suppose that the man conceives his lack of power because he understands (*intelligit*) something more powerful than himself, by the knowledge (*cognitione*) of which he measures his power of acting, then we conceive nothing but that the man understands himself distinctly (*se ipsum distincte intelligit*) or (by P26) that his power of acting is aided. So Humility, or the Sadness which arises from the fact that a man considers (*contemplatur*) his own lack of power, does not arise from a true consideration, or reason, and is a passion, not a virtue, q.e.d. (E4P53Dem)¹³

13 Cf. the end of art. 32 of the Appendix to Part Four.

Being is one with perfection—there is no lack of power or privation in nature. Truly understanding that the power of nature as a whole infinitely surpasses one's own, and determining one's own power in relation to that of external things means understanding oneself distinctly, i.e., true self-knowledge. True knowledge of oneself gives joy, so supports one's own power of acting. The passion of humility on the other hand makes one imagine that one lacks something that reason shows one cannot have and ought not regret.¹⁴

The scientific approach to human affects should help one to free oneself from the bondage of passions and from complaining about their consequences, for there is nothing good or bad in nature as such. Concluding his analysis of pride and its various effects he comments:

These things follow from this affect as necessarily as it follows from the nature of a triangle that its three angles are equal to two right angles. I have already said that I call these, and like affects, evil insofar as I attend only to human advantage. But the laws of nature concern the common order of nature, of which man is a part. I wished to remind my readers of this here, in passing, in case anyone thought my purpose was only to tell about men's vices and their absurd deeds, and not to demonstrate the nature and properties of things. For as I said in the Preface of Part Three, I consider men's affects and properties just like other natural things. *And of course human affects, if they do not indicate man's power, at least indicate the power and skill of nature, no less than many other things we wonder at and take pleasure in contemplating.* (E4P57S, emphasis mine)

Before turning to Hume's account it is useful to look more carefully at the general definition of the affects given at the end of Part Three.

The affect called a passive experience is a confused idea whereby the mind affirms a greater or lesser force of existence of its body, or part of its body, than was previously the case, and by the occurrence of which the mind is determined to think one thing or another.

14 The passions of shame etc. can be useful, nevertheless, since men do not live according to reason. Cf. E4P54S: "Because men rarely live from the dictate of reason, these two affects, Humility and Repentance, and in addition, Hope and Fear, bring more advantage than disadvantage. So since men must sin, they ought rather to sin in that direction." This was known by the prophets who commended Humility etc. (*ibid.*): "The mob is terrifying, if unafraid. So it is no wonder that the Prophets, who considered the common advantage, not that of the few, commended Humility, Repentance, and Reverence so greatly. Really, those who are subject to these affects can be guided far more easily than others, so that in the end they may live from the guidance of reason, i.e., may be free and enjoy the life of the blessed."

The way ideas are linked to and follow upon each other depends on the links or association of the affections of the body (E2P18S), and our affects are subject to similar associations (E3P14 and Dem). All ideas we have of body that are based on affections indicate the actual state of our own rather than the nature of the external body acting on it (E3P16C). Those ideas that “constitute the specific reality” of an affect are indications or expressions of those particular states of the body or some of its part by which it passes from one state of perfection to another, i.e., by which its “power of activity or force of existence (*vis existendi*) is increased or diminished, assisted or checked.” It is not that these states are consciously compared to each other, but the idea itself “affirms of the body something that in fact involves more or less reality than was previously the case.”

The idea here is the mental counterpart of the state of the body; thus as the body’s power of existing increases or diminishes, the idea of it correspondingly involves more or less reality. The mind itself (which is nothing but the idea of the body) passes to a greater or lesser perfection accordingly. This is all Spinoza means by saying that “the mind’s power of thinking increases or diminishes,” namely, “that the mind has formed an idea of its body ... that expresses more or less reality that it had been affirming of it before.” I was hungry and filled my stomach with healthy food; the pleasure and contentment that replaces the feeling of hunger, means, also in this particular case of my awareness of my well nourished stomach, that the power of thinking of my mind has increased: “For the excellence of ideas and the actual power of thinking are measured by the excellence of the object.” (E3 General Definition of Affects, Explication.) My power of thinking has increased to the extent to which the sensations of emptiness and hunger have been replaced by sensations (ideas) of fullness and satisfaction, which express or reflect the changed state of parts of my body.

The last part of the general definition of emotions mentions that the ideas which constitute the specific reality of the emotion determine the mind to think “of one thing rather than another.” Spinoza says he added this “in order to express the nature of the desire in addition to the nature of the joy or sadness ...” Consider the example of hunger again: the affect of hunger made me desire food and kept my thoughts focused on how to find some. The affects of satisfaction or satiety, on the other hand, now make me think of the same food I was lusting for with aversion or disgust, which, given that I always desire to avoid what is unpleasant, turns my thoughts to other things than food—perhaps to some unpleasant business I need to attend to and the means of avoiding it. (E3P59S) Thus what we desire or shun, lust and long for, depends on the states of our body more than on the objects desired, and it is according to one’s own affects “that everyone judges or deems what is good, bad, better, worse, best or worst.” (E3P9S and E3P39S)

Note that there are many ideas involved in any particular passion apart from the one that constitutes its “specific reality,” which we could here call the actualization,

or the act-aspect, of the affect. This will help to distinguish it from its object—the idea or rather the image of the object accompanying it and thought of as its cause, and which could be called its object-aspect.¹⁵ For we are passive to the extent that we “imagine” (*imaginamur*), that is, have inadequate ideas, and the ideas of imagination are inadequate, i.e., obscure and confused, because they involve the nature of both our own body and of an external body. Thus “the explication of every passive affect must necessarily include an expression of the nature of the object by which we are affected.” (E3P56Dem) Two states of pleasure differ not only on account of the bodies whose states they are (equine lust differs from human lust), but also on account of the nature of the object lusted for (a mate, hay, water, a trip to the Caribbean). And there are as many kinds of pleasure, pain, love, hatred, pride and humility as there are kinds of object with which we are affected. (E3P56Dem) Whatever our passions are, we are at the mercy of conditions determining our trains of thought: what affects us thus and so depends on the present state and constitution of our body and on our personal history, on the patterns of associations of ideas and images that our life history has set up for us. We are no more in control of the affections of our body and how they happen to affect our minds than the waves of the sea and find our selves like waves “tossed about and driven by contrary winds, unsure of the outcome and our fate” (E3P59S).

5

The same ideas are at work in Hume’s account of passions and of pride that can be only briefly touched upon here. While Spinoza defines the passive affects as a subclass of affections, i.e., changes caused in the body by impact of other bodies, Hume defines them as a subclass of impressions, which are lively perceptions arising, directly or indirectly, by the actions of other bodies on our body and our bodily organs. They are secondary or reflective impressions indicating how external bodies or their ideas affect our body. Hume’s account of causation and belief-formation, where contingent regularities of nature and associational patterns of thinking are given a central role, differs from Spinoza’s only in terminology and through the empiricist emphasis. Hume does replace the Cartesian epistemological criteria of clarity, distinctness and adequacy

15 This traditional distinction between act and object is not the same Spinoza implies when arguing for the identity of the idea (of the mind) and its object (the body), but it helps remind us that passions for Spinoza too are complex intentional states composed of several ideas, the act-aspect expressing how the body is affected, and the object-aspect individuating this state through its associated object. It also helps me draw attention to what I take to be yet another similarity: that between what Spinoza calls the “specific reality” of the affect unfailingly bringing a specific kind of idea to mind, and what Hume calls the “very essence or being of the passions” in T, 2.1.5.4. See Alanen (2005).

that Spinoza makes use of by his own phenomenal marks of vivacity and liveliness. Force and vivacity, however, meet the conditions of Cartesian “clearness”: a perception is forceful and vivid which is present and manifest to consciousness. What happens in Hume, and here he does differ from Spinoza, is that distinctness, and with it adequacy, drop out of the picture: all we have is the degree of force or vivacity with which beliefs impinge on us and influence our actions.¹⁶

I cannot here dwell on Hume’s explication of emotions as secondary impressions or of the mechanisms through which they operate.¹⁷ But I want to note the parallel between what in Spinoza’s account is called the “specific reality of the affect” which corresponds to how the body is affected, and the idea object accompanying it and seen as its cause, and what in Hume’s account is called the very being or essence of an emotion and the idea causing it (mentioned in note 15 above). The former, in both cases, have to do with the intensity or felt manner of how the idea-cause affects us—of what present-day analysts of emotions might call the feeling component—and are unfailingly associated with their characteristic idea-objects on which they fix our attention. Hume’s elaborate analysis of the causes and objects of the so-called “indirect” passions to which pride and humility belong goes in detail and observations far beyond Spinoza’s, but the central psychological principles are basically the same. By the pleasure or pain they cause, the impressions or their idea-copies affect our desire: we naturally seek pleasant impressions and avoid the painful ones. Like Spinoza, Hume stresses the central role of the more or less mechanically governed imagination in causing and sustaining the passions: nothing can affect the imagination while remaining “entirely indifferent” to the affections. (T, 2.3.6.1) Where Spinoza invokes the *conatus*, Hume invokes natural propensities of the mind and of the passions themselves. The most important points of difference have to do not so much with their account of passions and thoughts as with their views of the nature of reason and hence of the self as an object of cognition.

For Spinoza pride and humility are what make us aware or conscious of how we—our bodies—are affected, but because the ideas they involve are partial and “mutilated” they are at the same time indications of our ignorance of self. For Hume, on the contrary, the affective self-awareness they provide is really all there is to the self and our sense of a self, and the self they reveal is no more and no less enduring than the passions producing it. Pride simply brings the self into our view, whether for just or unjust reasons, merely on account of the pleasant impressions accompanying the representation of any property or belonging of ours that we like and find worthy of

16 How much of a difference there really is can be debated. The recent discussion by Della Rocca (2003) sees beliefs as a matter of force or power of the ideas in a way which reduces the activity of the mind to a minimum. See also Owen (forthcoming).

17 For a more detailed account, see Alanen (forthcoming).

approval, and it also keeps the self in focus as long as this pleasure (that we always seek) lasts. It is mainly through pride and humility or related passions that our self-image and hence idea of self as a cognitive object is constituted.¹⁸ The passion of pride and self-awareness are connected by “natural instinct” or association:

First, I find, that the peculiar object of pride and humility is determin'd by an original and natural instinct, and that 'tis absolutely impossible, from the primary constitution of the mind, that these passions shou'd ever look beyond self, or that individual person, of whose actions and sentiments each of us is intimately conscious. Here at last the view always rests, when we are actuated by either of these passions; *nor can we, in that situation of mind, ever lose sight of this object.* For this I pretend not to give any reason; but consider such a peculiar direction of the thought as an original quality. (T, 2.1.5.3, emphasis mine)

Hume had argued in his devastating analysis of the self of Book One of the *Treatise* that if there were such a thing as a unified substantial self, it would be an item in one's experience. Since he restricts experience to what is known through the senses (and through impressions of reflexion which reveal our own reactions to sense-impressions), he cannot find any “constant and invariable” impressions of one self that would remain stable throughout one's life, and where there is no impression, no idea can be found either. (T, 1.4.6.) Introspection reveals nothing but thoughts, sensations, emotions, but not the thing which has them.¹⁹ We are “nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.” He compares the mind to “a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations.” (T, 1.4.6.3–4) But this

18 T, 2.2.1.2: “As the immediate object of pride and humility is self or that identical person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are intimately conscious; so the object of love and hatred is some other person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are not conscious.” As indirect passions governed by the double-association principle both pairs of passions are structurally and dynamically identical: they differ only through “the object to which they direct our view”: love turning our view to the other person causing it, and pride to oneself as its cause. Love is defined by Spinoza too as joy or pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause (E3Def aff 6). Hume points out that it excludes love from taking the form of love of oneself properly, moreover, love comes with benevolence which is not self-directed, and so seems to correct Spinoza on this point, who has no problem with love being directed at self.

19 T, 1.4.6.3: “For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception.”

metaphor should not mislead one: there is nothing but the successive perceptions, and they are what constitute the mind. We do not have the faintest notion either of the place, where these scenes are represented, or of the materials of which it is composed. An analogy sometimes suggested is that of having the impression in darkness of a single light's travelling, which is created by the sight of successively illuminated adjacent lamps, each going on as its neighbor is extinguished.²⁰ But this is misleading too, because as a matter of fact the impressions constituting whatever self-consciousness there is come not in a discrete series but associated in certain fixed, though contingent, patterns or clusters, and what connects them is our *natural propensity* to imagine that we are simple subjects with identity over time, propensity which is supported and fed by the passions of pride and humility. But we have no rational or factual grounds for also inferring that we are enduring entities with identity over time. There is no self beyond the one our passions bring to our attention and make us form various beliefs about. Having deflated the rationalist's notion of reason as well, there is nothing left to hook the idea of a true self onto.²¹

Examining where the propensity to believe in personal identity comes from, Hume distinguished between two questions, "betwixt personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves." (T, 1.4.6.5) The answer to the first question—with which he said he was deeply unsatisfied—is that imagination produces the idea of a self by uniting its impressions and ideas on the basis of the laws of association. (T, 1.4.6.15–16) The most important association here is by causation, and Hume ends up comparing the soul to a republic or commonwealth whose changing individual members correspond to the system of causally related perceptions that "mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other." He notes that its

several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons, who propagate the same republic in the incessant changes of its parts. And as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in like manner the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity. *Whatever changes he endures, his several parts are still connected by the relation of causation. And in this view our identity with regard to the passions serves to corroborate that with regard to the imagination, by the making our distant perceptions influence each other, and by giving us a present concern for our past or future pains or pleasures.* (T, 1.4.6.18, emphasis mine)

20 See Candlish (1998).

21 For a perspicuous and clarifying account of Hume's restructuring of cognitive faculties and of what exactly Hume's reason amounts to in this new picture, see Garrett (forthcoming).

This suggests that what in the end is crucial for whatever personal identity we can have on Hume's account consists in the particular ways in which our ideas (those related to this mind-or-body of mine) are governed and interrelated. Since passions are powerful instruments in determining what we think of and how our ideas are connected, the answer to the second question—that of personal identity as it regards our passions and the concern we take in ourselves—completes and corroborates the first.

The answer is given through the analysis of Book II of the *Passions*, which starts with the analysis of pride, which occupies the major part of the book. If the first question concerned the philosophical idea of the self as a subject of thought or imagination, the second question concerns a more mundane phenomenal or moral self, and that is what interests us here. Pride and humility, which “by an original and natural instinct” always have the self as their “peculiar” object (T, 2.1.5.3), are crucial here.²² It is not only that they keep our attention focused on our selves, for the idea of self is in a sense always in view. We are always more or less conscious of our present desires, or as Spinoza would have it, of our striving to persist in our being. But more particularly, they also avert us to how we, this self we are constantly conscious of, fares, and to the things that can feed and support or undermine and destroy us or the pleasant ideas of self that come with pride. In the absence of any privileged direct access to a true self, pride and humility are what form our image of or beliefs about our selves, which depend on how others see us as much as on how we imagine that others evaluate us, our properties, belongings and behavior. It is through our propensity to pride and humility that we are sensitive to approbation or blame, and it is through these passions that we can influence and correct one another.

Our reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and even the other causes of pride; virtue, beauty and riches; have little influence, when not seconded by the opinions and sentiment of others. (T, 2.1.II.1)²³

- 22 All the philosophical qualms about the theoretical foundations of the idea of the self are here forgotten (T, 2.1.2.2): “This object is self, or that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness. Here the view always fixes when we are actuated by either of these passions. According as our idea of ourself is more or less advantageous, we feel either of those opposite affections, and are elated by pride, or dejected with humility. Whatever other objects may be comprehended by the mind, they are always consider'd with a view to ourselves; otherwise they would never be able either to excite these passions, or produce the smallest increase or diminution of them. When self enters not into the consideration, there is no room either for pride or humility.”
- 23 We “fancy ourselves more happy, as well as more virtuous or beautiful, when we appear so to others” (T, 2.1.6.6). Cf. Henderson (1990).

Arriving at a better self-understanding, or achieving the kind of permanent contentment that only a lasting pleasant consideration of self can give us, must have to do with success in adjusting one's self-image to the critical view of those sympathetic observers who care about us and can judge our behavior and actions from a more general, inter-subjective point of view. Pride comes with joy and pleasant feelings, humility with pain or sadness and unpleasant feelings, and these will determine not only how one views oneself in the given situation but also how one will act with respect to the things causing these passions. Fed and informed by our actual beliefs and imagination, they are expressed in our bodily postures, gestures and behavior. Other animals than humans display them as well, and we see pride and humility in the gait and port of a peacock or a swan ... These passions and their derivatives are what guide our constant concern for ourselves, for our past, present and future pains or pleasures. They also have an important moral function, because they depend on how others view us—more precisely, on how we imagine others view us—and because we seek pleasure by nature and need others to mirror and share our pleasure we will do whatever we can to impress each other favorably, seeking the company, esteem and praise of others, avoiding as best we can their scorn or blame. A long-lasting approbation by one's fellows presupposes some moderation of one's natural propensity to pride.²⁴

6

Having deconstructed the idea of a substantial self and deflated the rationalist's notion of reason, there is nothing else than the affection of pride to base our sense of self and self-contentment on. Hume's naturalism is more radical than Spinoza's, leaving no room for falling back on any concept of a higher or better true self, which Spinoza, following here the ancients rather than the moderns, identifies with reason. For reason, in Spinoza's view, is our better part, and only affects that follow from reason are active, for they are the only ones that follow from "our nature" and power proper, as opposed to those—passive affects or emotions—depending on "the power of things external to us." While "the former always indicate our power, the latter our impotence and fragmentary knowledge." (E4 Appendix 2) The active affects are always good, because they are rational—the others are neither good nor bad (E4 Appendix 3) and follow the common order of nature. The former are good for us qua rational beings, and it is rationality that defines our true being. From the point of view of our rational being, i.e., the mind in so far as it is "conceived as consisting of adequate ideas" (E4 Appendix

24 Hume thinks that pride represents a case of unmixed, pure and restive emotion: one which does not produce any further desires. So when it is justified, which for Hume requires that it to be reflected in and sustained by the esteem of others, the contemplation of oneself in favorable light produces enduring bliss. See Baier (1980).

2), anything that hinders us to perfect it is evil, so passive affects, including pride, are evil: they consist of inadequate ideas which hide our true self (rational mind) from view. Perfecting one's intellect—"understanding God and the attributes and actions that follow from his nature"—is of highest importance in life, and the "highest desire," or the ultimate goal of a person guided by reason, is "that by which he is brought to an adequate conception of himself and all the things that can fall under the scope of his intelligence." (E4 Appendix 4)

To achieve an adequate conception of self is our highest desire and goal as rational beings. Qua individuals we are the sum of the affections of our body and of the inadequate ideas expressing these—they are what define us as particular beings or persons. Qua rational we are the sum of all the adequate ideas we qua individuals can have. What preserves our individuality when we pass from inadequate to adequate ideas remains a mystery to me, and I leave it to those who understand what Spinoza says about the essence of human being in E2P11, including the demonstration and its corollary, and Part Five of the *Ethics*, better than I do. Looking back at the history of the concept of self-knowledge, to which Spinoza with the ancients gives such high priority, it seems to me that Spinoza should be placed in the camp of those who identify our true self with universal reason rather than with this contingent collection of extended modes and inadequate ideas in which it is expressed.

Considering different ways of treating the question of self-knowledge in the Western tradition, two influential classic approaches which are in tension with one another can be seen at work here. The first was developed by the ancient Greek philosophers, who identified the self with the universal capacity to think and act rationally, and the second by Christian thinkers who, following Augustine, located the self in the will of the individual human person. In the first tradition self-knowledge was generally thought to be possible but its object is universal reason and not an individual subject. In the second tradition a genuine self emerges but because it is tied to the will and the changing desires of the individual person, it turns out to be inaccessible to distinct knowledge. The first tradition allows for knowledge of human nature but not of an individual self, while the latter tradition allows for an individual self and self-awareness, but for no distinct self-knowledge. Although Spinoza belongs to those early modern naturalists who deny the will and dissolve the self into a collection of changing affections and strivings, he still retains the idea of reason as the locus of a higher self that true knowledge can salvage from the contingencies and dependencies of corporeal existence. Hume, at this point, seems more consistent. Having dissolved the Self into a succession of sets of impressions (and desires), he recognizes that self-knowledge is possible at best indirectly, by reflection on how we act, react and affect other human beings, whose company we need to survive and whose minds mirror our own.

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MARCO M. OLIVETTI

The Community of Minds as a Problem of
Modern Philosophy: Descartes, Leibniz, Kant

I

The issue I address in this paper, as it is enounced in the title, is like a coin which may only be analysed by alternately regarding its two sides: the history of the words on the one hand, and the history of ideas or concepts on the other. I do not, thereby, wish to suggest that we should also draw a further distinction between what we traditionally call “history of ideas” and “history of concepts”: these expressions are certainly in use to designate the disciplines known as, respectively, *history of ideas* proper and *Begriffsgeschichte*. Here, however, I intend only to concentrate on aspects of the signifier (i.e., words and their history) and of the signified (i.e., the ideas, or concepts, and their history) alternately. The two histories are certainly deeply interwoven, although this does not mean that the history of ideas and concepts coincides with the history of the words by which they are signified: a given word may change its semantic intension in the course of time and certain concepts, conversely, have at different times had different words to connote them.

I felt it necessary to make these simple introductory remarks in that, when it comes to the community of minds, the image of a coin and its two sides bears directly on the theoretical substance of the issue in question and on the historical context in which such theoretical substance took shape. The community of minds is a community composed of subjects who communicate among themselves, although with the peculiarity that, being minds and not bodies, they ought to be able to merely transmit ideas without embodying ideas in words (I shall not here address the possibility that they could not, thereby, also conceal ideas through silence or words carefully chosen to mislead).

The question of the community of minds is therefore a modern problem, in the sense that it rests upon the construction of what we may term, after Hegel, the “philosophy of finite subjectivity”—or “philosophy of reflection of subjectivity”—and the ensuing question of inter-subjectivity. It is well known that a great deal of attention was spent, in the Middle Ages, on the language of angels.¹ We should perhaps say from

1 For an excellent recent study, see Suarez-Nani (2002); for the theoretical aspects which concern linguistic communication between and amongst different ontological systems (God, angels, humans), also see Parret (1992).

St. Paul² to Hamann³ at least, rather than just say Middle Ages; a period, at any rate, with the nature of a hiatus or interval, an Age in-between, so as to bring out the “modern” nature and origin of the question I address here and which we may collocate in the semantic area of the term *inter-subjectivity*, i.e., a field which presupposes a modern semantic redefinition of the *subjectum*.

The term *inter-subjectivity* was originally devised by Husserl, although it has now become a possibly over inflated term and a part of ordinary language. Both its technical origins and its successive drift into ordinary language have to be regarded as symptoms of the problems created by the “philosophy of finite subjectivity.” Husserl, as a matter of fact, only started speaking in terms of *inter-subjectivity* and only began dealing with the problem which goes under this name when he began to understand and reformulate his own phenomenological programme in terms of a “transcendental” philosophy. We should equally note that Husserl publicly addressed the problem of inter-subjectivity only when he was finally induced to define the historical collocation and derivation of his phenomenological programme, which is to say in the course of lectures which were given the title of *Cartesian Meditations* (a far more appropriate title than is frequently understood, no matter how one chooses to understand the relationship between Cartesianism and transcendentalism in the phenomenology of Husserl).

Modern philosophy of finite subjectivity developed through stages which need not be examined here in detail—from the conceptualisation of the *cogito* as substance “*qua nihil facilius a me percipi potest*” (as I would find fit to gloss), to Leibniz’s *apperception*, to the non-substantiated “I think” within the *transzendente Apperception* framework and beyond. It is beyond doubt, however, that the Cartesian divide between *res extensa* and a first person *res cogitans* has given rise to severe difficulties: indeed it has erected a barrier in the communication between individual and personal *res cogitantes*—a barrier which only comes down by means of the extraordinary one-way communication by virtue of which the Cartesian God, to whom the origin of everything is ascribed, furnishes all finite *res cogitantes* with the idea of infinity. What we find today is that contemporary philosophy is still engaged with these problems (and that it has widely forgotten the seriousness and obstinacy with which occasionalism has tried to respond).⁴

One could in fact say that what qualifies the programme of contemporary philosophy lies precisely in its attempts to find a solution to these problems—whether

2 1 Cor. 13, 1.

3 Hamann, *Aesthetica in nuce*, SW 2, 199: “Reden ist übersetzen, aus einer Engelsprache in eine Menschensprache, das heist, Gedanken in Worte—Sachen in Namen,—Bilder in Zeichen.”

4 Given that in this work I shall treat the Descartes-Leibniz-Kant paradigm *in apicibus*, I shall not touch upon a large number of authors, amongst whom is Malebranche, whose theoretical and historical importance cannot however go unmentioned (with regards to Leibniz too). On the argument of occasionalism, see the important works of R. Specht, e.g., Specht (1966).

the solution is sought in the conviction that philosophical modernity may yet be developed to the point of its full accomplishment (within the field of what may legitimately and properly be qualified as “modern” in philosophical terms, that is), or whether the problems are dealt with in those terms which are currently referred to as “postmodern.”

Contemporary approaches to the issue of the communication barriers of “modern” philosophy (understood as a philosophy of finite subjectivity) take two main directions which may be perfectly exemplified by, respectively, K.-O. Apel’s *Transformation der Philosophie*, and the work of Lévinas. On the one hand the Kantian “synthesis of apperception” is regenerated in the form of an equally transcendental “synthesis of communication”;⁵ on the other, what occasions the “reversal of transcendental apperception” rests upon the “epiphany” of the other rather than the phenomenon.⁶

In both instances language is seen as the dimension within which a solution to the problems raised by the philosophy of finite subjectivity may be found. This brings us back to the opening remarks on the peculiar, somewhat redoubled, meaningfulness of the words-ideas (and respective histories) issue and its bearing on the general question of the community of minds. (And let me add in brackets that this opens up the problem of the conditions under which what we may call *deceptio* or “strategic behaviour,” as it is called in contemporary theories of communicative ethics, becomes conceivable. It is worth noting, for instance, that Apel, who is a resolutely secular thinker, lent theoretical relevance to the figure of the devil in holding that there is a necessary presupposition of truth to lies, and that the latter are logically subordinated to the former.⁷ It is likewise worth noting that a post-phenomenologist such as Lévinas repeatedly evoked the figure of Gyges, the unseen seer.⁸ The issue of a *deceptor nescio quis* and of the feasible nature of such a *deceptor* also lies at the origins of modern philosophy of finite subjectivity. One should also seriously think about the fact that the theme of a *deceptio* is at the outset linked to that of sleep/wake: “quamvis semper dormiam, quamvis etiam is, qui me creavit, me deludat.”⁹ Kant, as we shall see, treats the problem of communication between minds in terms of wake/sleep. Here too we see Lévinas drawing from and as a prosecutor of such modern themes: his reversal of transcendental apperception into an epiphany of the other

5 From the very first essays collected in Apel (1973).

6 For an analytical treatment of such reversal, see Olivetti (1992) 73–97.

7 Apel (1973) *passim*.

8 Lévinas (1961) 148 and *passim*.

9 Descartes, *Meditationes* II, AT VII 28–29 24–22. On the possibility of conceiving the *deceptio* in the framework of the *potentia Dei absoluta*, cf. Gregory (1974) 477–516, (1982) 517–527.

may be read as a rediscovery of the Cartesian idea of wake, reformulated however in terms of the transcendental/inter-subjective *éveil* of an otherwise “drunken” consciousness.¹⁰)

I wish to mention here a further albeit less known line of thinkers who have also contributed, alongside the two great philosophical approaches introduced above, to the debate on inter-subjectivity and inter-subjective communication seen as a problem which originates within modern philosophy of finite subjectivity. Such a line originated in Italy after the work which Bonatelli conducted on Lotze and his Leibnizian philosophy (translating, among other things, *Microkosmos*¹¹); it continued with Varisco (under the headings of “interference” in subject-“pluralism”)¹² and finally led to Castelli, to his understanding of modern philosophy as a vertiginous race towards solipsism (which includes that which he terms the “theological solipsism” of Leibniz),¹³ and to his ironic understanding of language in its relation to thought.¹⁴

2

Under the heading “community of minds” I wish to gather a family of names which have occurred within the language of modern philosophy. One could cite, by way of example, the *assemblage de tous les esprits* in Leibniz’s *Monadology*, the *ethische gemein Wesen* in Kant’s *Religion*, Schiller’s and Hegel’s *Geisterreich*, through to Laberthonnière’s *société spirituelle* or, more famously, Husserl’s *monadologische Intersubjektivität*.

I choose to speak in terms of a “family” of expressions because I think it appropriate to treat the all-embracing expression “community of minds” in terms of Wittgenstein’s idea of family resemblances (thus evoking a further notion of generation, regeneration, and translation); an Aristotelian abstraction from *differentiae specificae* would not instead bear justice to the historical development of the ideas and words which designate them.

As we shall see later in talking about Leibniz and Kant, it is often found within the work of an author, often at intervals of very few pages or even lines of text, that

10 See Lévinas’s essays “De la conscience à la veille” and “Dieu et la philosophie” in Lévinas (1982) 34–61 and 93–127.

11 Bonatelli translated the first volume in Pavia in 1911. The second volume was translated by G. Capone Braga in Pavia in 1916.

12 Cf. Olivetti (1985) 279–285.

13 See Castelli (1933) and (1952).

14 In order to avoid that language be “played” by thought, Castelli not only made use of wordplay and ironic chiasmic constructions, but also elaborated a literary philosophical style which culminated in *Introduzione alla vita delle parole* (under the pseudonym D. Reiter), see Reiter (1938), in the fiction of the words themselves as independent subjects who speak among themselves and call back to each other.

there is a flourishing of expressions and images which all lead back to this linguistically inspiring concept—words such as “city,” “society,” “community,” “people,” “monarchy,” “kingdom,” “republic,” “church,” etc. The nouns are further qualified in order to clearly acquire the religious connotation already held by the last noun in the list, namely “church.” Many of the above mentioned expressions could indeed be led back to the “metamorphosis of the city of God” Gilson once wrote about.¹⁵ As far as “classical German philosophy” is concerned (namely the tradition within which this concept has been nurtured, upheld, and theoretically elaborated to the extreme with a precise aim to trace and overstep the boundaries of the “philosophy of finite subjectivity”), there would certainly be great scope for further investigating the works of Fichte, particularly his doctrine of science *nova methodo* and his lessons on the philosophy of freemasons, both of which are works which, for very different reasons, have been largely left out even within the wide area of influence of classical German philosophy.

I do not wish to dwell upon the religious expressions which draw on biblical and Christian language prevailing and which were then employed in modern philosophy to express the concept I here refer to as “community of minds” (from “God’s people” to “mystic body,” both of which expressions, for instance, have been used by Kant),¹⁶ nor do I intend to answer the interrogative whether their use is meant to state a sense of religious belonging, a residue of habitual usage, or a linguistic “secularisation” (as has sometimes been held in similar cases).¹⁷ I suggest turning the problem on its head and asking in what way the word “God” (or any other word or expression from what is generally qualified as religious language) comes to be semanticised and re-semanticised (what is its meaning?—to put the question in plain words). To put it differently, what kind of a “description” of the word, or “definition” of the concept it refers to, should we try to give within the context of the theoretical requirements of modern philosophy of finite subjectivity and, specifically, of the problem of the community of minds?

I shall largely treat these issues in the discussion of Leibniz and Kant below, although I first wish to justify adopting the expression “community of minds” as common denominator of the entire family of expressions in use in modern philosophy. I do not think that there should be any difficulty with the first term of the expression, namely “community,” the choice of which may seem more obvious than it actually is. Nor do I intend to distinguish the semantics of community from that of society (as in Tönnies’ all too famous dyad *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft*) for the plain reason that the authors in question do not; rather I decided to choose the term “community” because it widely occurs in the works of Kant I shall treat in the next section of this essay. Furthermore

¹⁵ Gilson (1952).

¹⁶ In Kant, *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, ch. 3, and *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 836, A 808 respectively.

¹⁷ Schöne (1958).

the romance term “community” corresponds to the use of the expressions, in Kant, *Gemeinschaft* and *gemeines Wesen*, which is a fact of some importance from both a historical and a theoretical point of view. The former term generally has categorical value and has a further relationship with the term *Wechselwirkung*, whereas the latter has a general political value, although this does not rule out categorical and noumenic usage. One should also bear in mind that the Kantian *gemeine Wesen* is modelled on the Latin *res publica*, and I believe this is entirely intentional on Kant’s part (proof of this is in one of the later writings, *Conflict of Faculties*, in which the phrase *das gemeine Wesen* is followed by the technical term in brackets *respublica noumenon* “understood as a Platonic ideal”).¹⁸

Whereas the term community may even be regarded as far too obvious a choice, there is instead need to qualify the use of “minds” as its complement. The term “mind” is the pivot of crucial lexical developments in modern philosophy of subjectivity. Descartes’ Second Meditation *De natura mentis humanae: quod ipsa sit notior quam corpus* is emblematic. If the perception of bodies requires neither touch nor sight but simply that they *intelligentur* by means of *solius mentis inspectio*, then nothing, Descartes maintains, “facilius aut evidentius mea mente po[te]st a me percipi.”¹⁹ The term *mens* appears in the context as an element in a long metonymical series as the first of the equivalent terms for *res cogitans*: “res cogitans, id est, mens, siue animus, siue intellectus, siue ratio, voces mihi prius significationis ignotae.”²⁰ Leaving *intellectus* and *ratio* marginally aside, on account of their successive histories, there are two points to be made on the subject of these semantic equivalences.

First point: Descartes chose to replace *animus-anima* with *mens* in the *Rationes* appended to the Second Objections and gave account of this choice in a letter to Mersenne from 1641: “*Anima* en bon latin signifie aërem, sive oris alitus: d’où je crois qu’il a été transféré *ad significandam mentem* et c’est pour cela que j’ai dit que *saepe sumitur pro re corporea*.”²¹

Second point: in the French translation of the *Meditations* we find the equivalence of the terms *mens-esprit*. Let us look at a passage from the Third Meditation “Sed mihi persuasi nihil plane esse in mundo, nullum coelum, nullam terram, nullas mentes, nulla

18 Kant, *Der Streit der Fakultäten*, A 156.

19 Descartes, *Meditationes* II, AT VII 34 3–6.

20 *Meditationes* II, AT VII 27 13–15.

21 Letter to Mersenne, AT III 362. In the essay “Sul concetto spinoziano di mens,” which appeared in one of the first volumes of the “Lessico intellettuale europeo” series, E. Giancotti Boscherini wrote: “Whereas Descartes prefers the term *mens* to *anima* when he wishes to underline that it is incorporeal of nature and can be separated from the body, Spinoza, who agrees on the incorporeal nature of *mens*, underlines however that it is inseparable from the body.” Boscherini (1969) 157.

corpora,”²² which in French reads: “je me suis persuadé qu’il n’y avoit rien du tout dans le monde, qu’il n’y avoit aucun ciel, aucune terre, aucuns esprits, ny aucuns corps.”²³ I choose to quote from this Meditation in which hyperbolic doubt is extended to minds as well for the reason that here the problem of the way in which minds communicate and form a community becomes explicit in the light of a danger of solipsism which is only averted under God’s infinite subjectivity (“si realitas objectiva alicujus ex meis ideis sit tanta ut certus sim eandem nec formaliter nec eminenter in me esse, nec proinde me ipsum ejus ideae causam esse posse, hinc necessario sequi, non me solum esse in mundo, sed aliquam aliam rem, quae istius ideae est causa, existere”).²⁴

The two points above legitimise the use of the expression “community of minds” to designate a problem opened up by the modern philosophy of finite subjectivity on both levels of the history of the words as of the history of the ideas (concepts and theories). The prosecution of these histories corroborates the notion that on both levels the problem developed as a compact unit. I shall focus on Leibniz and Kant because these philosophers represent the clearest development of the problem in question as a historically continuous and compact question. The theoretical discontinuity as well as the critical approach of either philosopher to their predecessor only brings out more clearly the continuous and compact face of the problem.

3

Entre autres differences qu’il y a entre les Ames ordinaires et les Esprits il y a encore celle-ci: que les Ames en general sont des miroirs vivans ou images de l’univers des creatures, mais que les Esprits sont encore des images de la Divinité même.²⁵

This quotation from § 83 of the *Monadology* is emblematic with regards to the matter we are dealing with because of the simultaneous presence of different important elements. In the first place it documents that the semantic distinction between *âme* and *esprit* is by now an established fact, which is all the more significant in the light of Leibniz’s critique of Descartes and Cartesian philosophers vis-à-vis their understanding of “ce qu’on appelle ‘perception’, qu’on doit distinguer de l’apperception ou de la conscience

22 *Meditationes* III, AT VII 25 2–4.

23 *Méditations* III, AT XI-1 19.

24 *Meditationes* III, AT VII 42 18–24.

25 Unless otherwise specified, the edition of the *Monadology* I shall refer to as I reorder the conceptual and lexical strands of the problem is Lamarra & Palaia & Pimpinella (2001); here I quote from p. 184.

... C'est aussi ce qui les a fait croire que les seuls Esprits étoient des Monades."²⁶ Not only the distinction is upheld, it is further reinforced by the conceptual and theoretical contents which the semantics of *âme* is loaded with in the explicit critique of the Cartesians who are seen to have remained caught in the "prejugé scholastique des ames entièrement séparées" and are therefore responsible for having "meme confirmé les esprits mal tournés dans l'opinion de la mortalité des ames."²⁷

The extent to which the semantic and theoretical developments of the word *âme* may have contributed, directly and through complex transitions, to Kant's calling into question rationalist accounts of psychology and to his transcendental account of apperception cannot here be investigated. It is certain that the issues raised so far are of the greatest relevance to the questions above, if one ever wanted to produce evidence of a connection (it would also provide evidence to the effect that the reciprocal variations of the history of the words and the history of the concepts are not specular). What has been shown so far in the comparison of Descartes and Leibniz, namely that strong semantic differentiation was not hindered and is rather the outcome of the replacement of a dualist metaphysics with a metaphysics of continuity, and what we shall see in the comparison of Leibniz and Kant provides rare and eloquent evidence for research in the field.

Before we approach the conceptual aspects of the community of minds according to Leibniz (justified and occasioned by the emblematic quotation from §83 of the *Monadology*) and before we look at Kant's response, there is a second terminological issue which again arises from the quotation examined above, namely the consolidated use of *esprits* in French, the vulgar language adopted at the time for cultural exchanges, to translate Latin *mens*, from which no French word had been derived. German equally lacked a word derived from *mens*,²⁸ with the outcome that the *mentes*, which had already become *esprits* in French, could have no other translation than *Geister* in German fortune of Leibniz. This not only occurred, however, in H. Köhler's German 1720 translation of the *Monadology*;²⁹ it produced the further result that in an anonymous

26 *Monadology* §14, 150.

27 *Ibid.*, 150–151.

28 Whereas English does not. The English translation in fact bears the title *Phenomenology of Mind* (1910, transl. B. Baillie). The Hegelian work ends with the image of the *Geisterreich* champagne chalice. *Geisterreich* is actually suppressed in the translation of the final verses: "This chalice of God's plenitude / yields foaming his infinitude." To some extent it vanishes also in the successive edition of Hegel's works in English translation, published with the title *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977, transl. A.V. Miller): "From the chalice of this realm of spirits / foams forth for him his own infinitude"—note that in this translation the political connotation of the term *Reich* is lost, whereas, as we shall see, this is actually what is at issue.

29 Published in a collection of works by Leibniz which appeared as *Lehr-Sätze über die Monadologie, ingleichen von Gott* etc.; I am still quoting from the edition given above.

translation of the *Monadology* from the vulgar into Latin (1721, attributed to Chr. Wolff)³⁰ *Esprits/Geister* is rendered not as *mentes* but *spiritus* (so that, for instance, §83, which became §86 in the Latin edition, reads: *Inter alias differentias, quae inter animas ordinarias et spiritus intercedunt*).³¹ Given that the original French edition of the *Monadology* was only published in 1840 (in the *Opera Omnia* edited by J.E. Erdmann),³² one can easily understand that *Geister* and *spiritus* had become the acquired terms, the fortune of which was then ensured by what is known as “classical German philosophy” and its influential elaborations of the Leibnizian *Cité de Dieu*, which is composed of the *assemblage de tous les Esprits* (which is to say, in the translations which circulated at the time, *Zusammennehmung aller Geister* and *omnes spiritus simul sumptos*).³³

Now, as I have said above, the conceptual distinction of *esprit* and *âme* is the very presupposition for the *Cité de Dieu*: if “les esprits sont capables d’entrer dans une Manière de Société avec Dieu,” this depends on the fact that, as Leibniz explains, spirits, alongside being living mirrors of the universe of creatures, are also, like souls, images of the divinity itself. From here descends a series of well known conclusions which, one could say, even from a technical point of view, end the *Monadology* in glory. Kant, on the other hand, will later have to deal with these conclusions which for him represent, taken separately and then as an overall system, points from which to depart, points to think back on, in an ongoing and tormented critical engagement: the natural world and the moral world (represented by the community of minds: “Cette cité de Dieu ... est un Monde Moral dans le Monde Naturel ... et c’est en lui que consiste véritablement la gloire de Dieu”);³⁴ efficient and final causes; God as architect and God as Legislator; the issues of theodicy and retribution (goods and punishments) in relation to divine attributes, particularly moral ones.

If the glorious conclusion in which the *Monadology* culminates offers unprecedented proof of Leibniz’s metaphysics of continuity (and if the *Monadology* itself stands for the unifying, ascending, and summarising conclusion of a conception which developed of a myriad prospective writings—not unlike, and this is not a metaphor, God and the monads), then it may be regarded as a unified discourse which is diffracted and disarticulated in the critical reading and echoing on Kant’s behalf, first of all thematically, then systematically, and finally *eundo*.

I have elsewhere maintained that Kant’s critical-transcendental programme underwent a process of progressive differentiation as it was brought forward in his works, leading him to produce works which had not been contemplated in the previous plan of

30 Cf. Lamarra (2001).

31 *Monadology*, 184.

32 Berlin 1840, anastatic reproduction Aalen 1959.

33 *Monadology*, 185.

34 *Monadology* §86, 185–186.

the Canon of the *Critique of Pure Reason*³⁵—neither as self-standing works, nor, indeed, as a part of that programme. The culmination of such a critical-transcendental programme, we therefore find, is represented, *à la Leibniz*, by the community of minds, the intelligible community, the “systematic ensemble” (*systematische Verbindung*) of members of the “intelligible world” (*Verstandeswelt, intellektuelle Welt, intelligibele Welt*, but also, for an interesting key to understanding the previous, *Welt der Intelligenzen*),³⁶ which is in other terms to be understood as the “kingdom of ends,” or, finally, the “ethical community.” And yet, and this marks a suffered distance from Leibniz, such a culmination articulates, or breaks against, forms of discontinuity between the natural and the moral world, phenomenon and noumenon, certainty (epistemic and/or moral) and faith-hope of reason.³⁷

The very unification of natural and moral world is thus subject to a hope, projected into the third question which articulates the Kantian programme: “was darf ich hoffen?” (what may I hope for?, but also, what can’t I not hope for?).³⁸

As a consequence, God’s role in the community of minds, or, to put it more correctly, the semantic development of the term “God” in the conceptual context of the community of minds, differs from the leader’s role in Leibniz’s spiritual city (in

35 Olivetti (2004).

36 All these expressions, and a number of others which appear in Kant’s works, are to be found at the pages of the *Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten*, in which he talks about the *Reich der Zwecke*.

37 Kant certainly knew the epistles of St. Paul, which were part of his upbringing; they are often quoted from in the *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. It is rather difficult to understand the relationship between *Vernunftglaube* and critical/transcendental ambition implied in the question “Was darf ich hoffen?” without bearing in mind the reduction to “the limits of reason alone” of Heb. 11, 1 (ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἐλπίζομένων ὑπότασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων; precisely translated by Dante in passing his exams in Paradise: “sostanza di cose sperate e argomento delle non parventi”).

38 There would be no need to cite this further meaning of *dürfen* which we find in German in Luther and up to the entire 18th century at least, and which also occurs in Kant, if it were not for the frequent use of adverbs such as *unumgänglich* and *unausweichlich*, particularly in the *Religion*, to qualify the transition from the “Was soll ich tun?” interrogative to “Was darf ich hoffen?,” which is to say from morals to religion: not the mere necessity (which is logical or physical), but the impossibility-of-not, which is anthropological and allows to summarise and complete the three interrogatives which articulate the critical programme in the one question “Was ist der Mensch?” I wish to thank Thomas Hünefeldt for an observation he made concerning a passage from my Italian translation of the *Religion*, which I think appropriate to extend to the third critical interrogative: “Unter einem *Hange* (propensio) verstehe ich den subjektiven Grund der Möglichkeit einer Neigung ... sofern sie für die Menschheit überhaupt zufällig ist. Er unterscheidet sich darin von einer Anlage, daß er zwar angeboren sein kann, aber doch nicht als solcher vorgestellt werden darf.” (*Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, A 18, B 20).

spite of the fact that, as we shall see, a number of the attributes Leibniz confers to God, and relative terminology, *législateur/Gesetzgeber* in particular, are taken up by Kant) to an extent which is comparable to the degree in which the theoretical role of the latter differs from that of the Cartesian God (or, at any rate, the God in the Third Meditation, who stands against the danger of solipsism and is certainly less exposed to such danger than is, paradoxically, the leader of the Leibnizian society of spirits).

The theoretical role of the Kantian God, however, in so far as God acts as legislator of the intelligible community, may be understood in its problematic aspects, and in the context of the theoretical framework within which it operates, on condition that one does not identify the two philosophical tenets of Kant's reappraisal and reformulation of Leibniz's moral world: I mean the *Reich der Zwecke* in the *Grundlegung* and the *ethische gemeine Wesen* in the *Religion*. The distinction Kant drew between these two figures of his community of minds has never properly been focussed on and is generally unacknowledged, for the reason that there is a tendency to regard the philosophical ecclesiology of the *Religion* as a re-edition of the "kingdom of ends" of the *Grundlegung*. Once again there manifests itself a lack of perception of the fact that for Kant too the problem of communication represents the real problem of the philosophy of finite subjectivity.

4

In the Third analogy of experience Kant specifies that the German word *Gemeinschaft* has two meanings, one of which is *communio*, and the other *commercium*.³⁹ The first meaning is appropriate when employed with reference to the apperception and its synthesis: in our mind, all phenomena, being the contents of a possible experience, "müssen in Gemeinschaft (*communio*) der Apperzeption stehen." If, on the other hand, we want this *subjektive Gemeinschaft* to have objective grounding, there is need for reciprocal influence "d.i. eine reale Gemeinschaft (*commercium*) der Substanzen" without which the empirical relationship of the *Zugleichsein* would not be possible.⁴⁰ Kant states that he will use the word in its second meaning, which would seem quite obvious, if not tautological, given that the Third analogy of experience, in the more precise definition of the second edition of the *Critique*, reads "Alle Substanzen, so fern sie *im Raume als zugleich wahrgenommen werden können, sind* in durchgängiger Wechselwirkung."⁴¹ In the first edition, however, the formulation of the Third analogy was significantly more generic, or dangerously more general, in that it did not include

39 *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B 260, A 213.

40 *Ibid.*, B 261, A 214.

41 *Ibid.*, B 257.

reference to the perception of space: "Alle Substanzen, sofern sie zugleich sind, *stehen* in durchgängiger *Gemeinschaft* (*d.i.* Wechselwirkung *unter einander*)."⁴²

By making explicit reference to the external form of empiric intuition in the second edition, Kant manifests the selfsame concerns which also induced him to write out the famous "Refutation of idealism" (which in fact appears in the following paragraph) and to introduce after this same paragraph the "General annotation to the system of principles."

Alongside the anti-idealistic pronouncement centred on the statement of the importance of the spatial form of the intuition, the General annotation also bears a short critical remark addressed against Leibniz. It is worthy of great attention (*sehr Bemerkungswürdiges*), Kant notes

daß wir die Möglichkeit keines Dinges nach der bloßen Kategorie einsehen können, sondern immer eine Anschauung bei der Hand haben müssen, um an derselben die objektive Realität des reinen Verstandesbegriffs darzulegen;⁴³

but more noteworthy still (or "curious," "strange": *merkwürdiger*) is: "daß wir, um die Möglichkeit der Dinge, zu Folge der Kategorien, zu verstehen, und also die objektive Realität der letzteren darzutun, nicht bloß Anschauungen, sondern sogar immer *äußere Anschauungen* bedürfen."⁴⁴ It is in applying this statement, which is valid for all categories, to the category of *Gemeinschaft*, that Leibniz seems to offer Kant an emblematic case:

Denn wie will man sich die Möglichkeit denken, daß, wenn mehrere Substanzen existieren, aus der Existenz der einen auf die Existenz der anderen wechselseitig etwas (als Wirkung) folgen könne, und also, weil in der ersteren etwas ist, darum auch in der anderen etwas sein müsse, was aus der Existenz der letzteren allein nicht verstanden werden kann? denn dieses wird zur Gemeinschaft erfordert, ist aber unter Dingen, die ein jedes durch seine Subsistenz völlig isolieren, gar nicht begreiflich. *Daher Leibniz, indem er den Substanzen der Welt, nur, wie sie der Verstand allein denkt, eine Gemeinschaft beilegte, eine Gottheit zur Vermittlung brauchte.*⁴⁵

Yet in the *Religion*, at the conclusion of a long and tormented path, Kant too, who had thus criticised Leibniz, will make recourse to such divine *Vermittlung* for the ethical

42 *Ibid.*, A 211.

43 *Ibid.*, B 288, A 235.

44 *Ibid.*, B 292.

45 *Ibid.*, B 293. My italics in the last sentence.

community, that is to say, to a community amongst minds. One would be inclined to say that in the end Kant made recourse to such a *deus ex machina* although there was no longer an issue of *res extensae* but, paradoxically, of a community of free *Intelligenzen*.

We know that Kant had begun facing the question of the *Gemeinschaft mit der Geisterwelt* already in writing his *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*. Kant, who was a disciple of Knutzen, had already defended the real character of the *nexus externus* of action and reaction in the *Nova dilucidatio*, and in *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* he had begun to treat the problem of the spatial dimension in a manner which, although it predates the critical approach, marked the distance there was with the dreams of Leibniz's metaphysics. In a dream each individual lives in a separate world, but in wake we share a common world (*gemeinschaftlich*: that is, "implicating community"), Kant warns—yet although he invokes the authority of what Aristotle says "in some place,"⁴⁶ he is clearly drawing on the sleep/wake argument which had been devised as a modern response to solipsism, and also, in spite of the circularity of the argument, as a manner of establishing the existence of other minds and thus validating the argument.

(Given the above-mentioned historical and theoretical connection between the sleep/wake question and that of the *deceptio* one could ask—again in brackets—whether Kant's horror of lies, which he understood in every sense as moral *πρῶτον ψεῦδος*, does not descend from his affirmation of the autonomy of ethics, and therefore from the lack of an external foundation of truth-truthfulness. Conversely one could ask whether his enthusiasm for the public dimension, which is built in to the *Aufklärung*, does not hide a horror for impossibility of making public the intrinsically private dimension of the mind: we shall see that the transition from the private dimension of the *Vernunftwesen* as moral being to the public dimension of the ethical community and its legislation is the object of a hope which, in order not to be a dream, is in need of the *Vermittlung* of the moral legislator.)

In spite of the important connection which Kant establishes between sleep-private dimension on the one hand and wake-community on the other, one should not forget that the *Dreams* is a complex work and at times cryptically inspired, as it is shown by the correspondence (which seems to me an anticipation of the transcendental dialectic) between the "Fragment of secret philosophy (*geheime Philosophie*) for disclosing the community with the world of spirits" and the successive "Antikabbala: fragment of common philosophy (*gemeine Philosophie*) for going beyond the community with the world of spirits." It should be noted that the quotation from Aristotle mentioned above,

46 It is actually frag. 89 from Heraclitus ὁ Ἡράκλειτος φησι τοῖς ἐγγρηγοροῖσιν ἓνα καὶ κοινὸν κόσμον εἶναι, τῶν δὲ κοιμωμένων ἕκαστον εἰς ἴδιον ἀποστρέφεισθαι; Diels & Kranz, III, 22 B 89. Heidegger also made observations on this same passage, with reference to the idea of κόσμος/*Welt*, which are pertinent to the issue in question, in *Vom Wesen des Grundes* (afterwards in *Wegmarken*, see Heidegger 1976).

which is all too often regarded as reflecting Kant's position *tout court* (a belief made stronger by the inclusion of the word "dreams" in the general title of the work), is at the opening of the "Antikabbala," that is to say, the part of *gemeine Philosophie* in dialectical opposition to the "Fragment" of *geheime Philosophie*.

Although Kant believes that the greatest caution is required in treating such concepts as that of spirits (they are not objects of experience and could therefore be surreptitious, *erschlichen*), he also observes, in a manner which anticipates his criticism, that if something cannot be experienced, it does not mean that it therefore cannot exist: "knowing" (*erkennen*) is different from "thinking" (*begreifen*).⁴⁷ This distinction provides the foundation for the opposition, which I have called dialectic, between *geheime* and *gemeine Philosophie*, and it also provides the foundation for the possibility of formulating subjective "hypotheses" and *fictiones heuristicae*, which is a possibility Kant invokes in his answer to Mendelssohn's dismayed reaction to that strange work,⁴⁸ which is a significant anticipation of what he will say in the *Critique of Judgement* with regards to a finalistic approach in the study of nature.

At this point there is all the reason to acknowledge the heuristic strength of Kant's account of the two forces which move the human heart: on the one side there is the "intimate" force, which regards everything as a means to its "private needs"; on the other there is a force which operates within "as though it were an external will," ensuring not only that we seek the approval of other people (which is a way of procuring the *Ganz der denkenden Wesen* a certain *Vernunftseinheit*),⁴⁹ but that we recognise that the point of convergence our desires are aimed at lies "outside ourselves," in "other people's will":

Dadurch sehen wir in den *geheimsten* Beweggründen abhängig von der Regel des allgemeinen Willens, und es entspringt daraus in der Welt aller denkenden Naturen eine moralische Einheit und systematische Verfassung nach bloßen geistigen Gesetzen.⁵⁰

It has rightfully been recognised that this description of a *Wechselwirkung*, as Kant himself calls it, between the "human world" and the "spirit world," which "springs out of the foundation of morality,"⁵¹ is certainly an anticipation of the *Reich der Zwecke*

47 *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik*, A 15.

48 Cf. letter to Mendelssohn, April 8, 1766, in Kant, AA X 68.

49 *Träume eines Geistersehers*, A 42.

50 *Ibid.* My italics underline that the use of the adjective *geheim* in the phrase *geheime Philosophie* is far from ironic and that the adjective, partly because it echoes *gemein*, partly because of the dialectic construction of Kant's discourse, has greater intrinsic meaning than it would have if it were to be understood as a sporadic echo of Swedenborg's *Arcana coelestia*, which are often mentioned in literary works.

51 *Ibid.*, A 43–45.

of the *Foundation*; more clearly still it allows us to realise that the “kingdom of ends” is a reductive and provisional step in the long theoretical path set out in the *geheime Philosophie* with the heuristic hypothesis formulated therein. The fact that we should all depend on a “rule of general [or ‘universal’: *allgemein*] will” in the *geheimsten Beweggründen*, apart from evoking strong associations with Rousseau, is the prelude to an actual problem of public legislation and real *commercium*: this *commercium* is so real and communicative that Kant compares the dependence of “private will” on “communal will” in all spiritual natures, and the *allgemeine Wechselwirkung* through which the immaterial world “gains its ethical unity”⁵² with Newton’s idea of gravitation (and space!).

In this connection, the “kingdom of ends” introduced in the *Foundation* as a “systematic connection operated by *communitarian* laws” (*gemeinschaftlich*)⁵³ represents a double, intentional reduction on Kant’s behalf if we look at it as the point of arrival of that phase of his philosophical research, or, if we invert the perspective and regard the *Dreams* as the first step of an intellectual path which leads to the *Religion*, it may be seen as a preliminary acquisition in terms of “ethical unity” for the “immaterial world.”

By saying double, intentional reduction I mean that a first reduction consists of the fact that the kingdom of ends “completely abstracts” from the “contents of private ends” and only on this condition can also be seen as “totality of all ends” in “systematic connection.”⁵⁴ Correspondingly, and in a specular way, the overall morality thus outlined emerges as the total sum of isolated rational agents amongst whom there is no *commercium*: rather they may all be regarded as individually laying down a universal legislation through the maxim of their action. God is evoked in the context of the kingdom of ends as a theoretical figure devoid of an actual role within the kingdom:⁵⁵ God’s actual role is rather that of bringing out, by contrast, the condition of being a member (*Glied*) of the kingdom, as opposed to the condition of being the “supreme ruler” (*Oberhaupt*). A member is no less of a “legislator” (*Gesetzgeber*) than the supreme ruler within the “possible” kingdom of ends thanks to his freedom of will—the difference is that whereas the “supreme ruler” has “no needs,” all members are needful rational beings.⁵⁶ Even if the supreme ruler unified under his jurisdiction the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of ends and the latter thus obtained actual reality, that, according to Kant, would not constitute an increase of the “intrinsic value” of the kingdom of ends because said “sole and unrestricted ruler” would still have to

52 *Ibid.*

53 *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, B A 75.

54 *Ibid.*

55 My views therefore diverge from those expressed in Pirni (2000) 82 ff. This excellent work, in any case, stands out against the critical panorama of works on the topic, as also does Alici (1996). Less persuasive I find Habichler (1991).

56 *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, B A 76.

judge all rational beings on the grounds of the behaviour they developed “moving from that idea” as idea.

This is Kant’s second, intentional reduction: the kingdom of ends is made “possible” by freedom of will and that is sufficient to give it objective reality as a practical idea. In this respect the *Foundation* does not alter, indeed it strengthens, the sharp separation between theoretical and practical, between “kingdom of nature” and “kingdom of grace,” which Kant had set, with a reference to Leibniz, in the first *Critique*⁵⁷ after he had talked about the *corpus mysticum* of rational beings: the “systematic unity” of this body is a world which is “intelligible” as a “mere idea.”⁵⁸

Both these reductions offered in the *Foundation* reveal, on the other hand, their provisional nature (be it even definitively provisional) and their character of stages in a developing intellectual path, if they are measured against the critical hope founded on a “rational faith” expressed in the *Religion*. The “ethical community” envisaged in the latter work is an “ethical civil state” which stands in opposition to the “ethical state of nature” in which each individual “is a law unto himself.”⁵⁹ An intentional echo of Hobbesian themes takes the place of Rousseau’s general will: “Der Mensch soll aus dem ethischen Naturzustande herausgehen, um ein Glied eines ethischen *gemeinen Wesen* zu werden.” Thus recites the title itself of the second paragraph of philosophical ecclesiology in the *Religion*. Kant insistently places the stress on the need that the legislation in the ethical community be “public” if there is to be a transition from an ethical state of nature to an ethical civil state. What marks the radical difference with the kingdom of ends is that if one wants the *gemeine Wesen* to be ethical, the people cannot itself be regarded “as legislator,” for the reason that human public laws invest the “outward legality” of behaviour, not its “internal morality.” “Es muß also *ein Anderer*, als der Volk sein, der für ein ethisches gemeines Wesen als *öffentlich gesetzgebend* angegeben werden könnte.”⁶⁰

Thus Kant returns to the *göttliche Vermittlung*, which he had previously criticised in Leibniz, in order to ensure that rational beings may communicate amongst themselves *qua* rational beings. The importance of the statement that “an other” must “publicly intervene as legislator” is measured by the fact that, unlike the “you ought” of the *Foundation* which immediately entails “therefore you can,” the ethical community envisions a *sui generis* duty (*eigener Art*), a duty “of human kind unto itself” which is not related to our power. There is no need to say *who* must intervene for it to take effect. Unlike Leibniz, Kant dissociates the “father” figure from that of the “monarch” and denies that one should think of “God’s people” in terms of a “monarchy”—it should rather be seen as a family (father, son, and brothers spiritually united in a

57 *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, A 813, B 841.

58 *Ibid.*, A 808, B 836.

59 *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, A 123, B 131.

60 *Ibid.*, A 130, B 138. My italics.

community). One cannot but remark, however, that in such an “ethical civil state,” the “other” gathers all powers in a form of trinitarian unity: legislative (promoter of the constitution), executive (brings it to effect), and judiciary (searches into the hearts).

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INGOLF U. DALFERTH

Varieties of Philosophical Theology Before and After Kant

1. *Prehistory, History, and Posthistory of Philosophical Theology*

Philosophical theology (PT),¹ which replaced natural and rational theology after Kant, began its modern career as a distinct philosophical project, based not on faith and religion but on reason and reflection and/or nature, experience, and science. However, it has never been a monolithic endeavour, and its impact on Christian thinking has been constructive as well as critical or even destructive.

Its prehistory that is sometimes mistakenly taken to be part of it includes such diverse factors as Platonist dualism, the Aristotelian pattern of causality, Stoic immanentism, Philonian personalism, Neoplatonist negative theology and Sozinian antitrinitarianism. From its most ancient roots the *theology of the philosophers* in the Western tradition was intimately bound up with the rise of reason and science in ancient Greece. When the gods ceased to be part of the furniture of the world, God (the divine) became an explanatory principle based not on the traditional mythological tales but on cosmological science, astronomical speculation, and metaphysical reflection. Its idea of God involved the ideas of *divine singularity* (there is only one God), of *divine transcendence* (God is neither part nor the whole of the world) and of *divine immanence* (God's active presence can be discerned in the order, regularity, and beauty of the cosmos). And even though it took a long time to grasp those differences clearly, the *monotheistic difference* between gods and God, the *cosmological difference* between God and the world, and the *metaphysical difference* between the transcendence and immanence of God have remained central to the intellectual enterprise of theological reflection in philosophy.

But the ancient *theology of the philosophers* is not PT in the modern sense, though it shares its difference from Christian theology. From its apologetic beginnings in the early church Christian theology defined itself in contrast not only to the mythologies of the Graeco-Roman world, but also to the philosophical cosmotheologies of the Hellenistic period and the prophetic theology of the Jewish tradition. It sought to conceive God in personal terms, and as acting in history, without relapsing into myth; it sought to conceive God as creator and ruler of the universe without reducing God to a metaphysical principle of the world; and it sought to conceive God as the eschatological

1 For an abbreviated and different version of the following, cf. Dalforth (2005).

saviour who had acted in Jesus Christ in a definitive way, universally valid and relevant not only for the Jews but for everyone. In combining these strands it developed a revelation-based theology worked out in Christological and Trinitarian terms, and it accepted the theology of the philosophers only as a preliminary and insufficient “natural” knowledge of God.

In the intellectual matrix of the 13th century Aquinas reformulated this in terms of a hierarchy of nature and grace. Philosophy can arrive at a natural knowledge of God the creator by way of causality, analogy, and negation, but this is to be perfected by the revealed knowledge of the Trinitarian mystery of God the saviour based on Christ and scripture. However, the integrating power of this view depends on two assumptions that are not shared by modern PT: the idea of creation as the common frame of reference for both philosophical and theological knowledge of God, and the validity of the use of causality, analogy and negation to move intelligibly from the order of nature to the order of grace without either mystifying reason or rationalising revelation.

The medieval synthesis of reason and faith collapsed, on the one hand, with the differentiation of Christian theology into different confessional traditions since the Reformation and, on the other, with rise of modern philosophy and empirical science. This fundamentally changed the situation for PT, and marked the decisive step from its prehistory to its history. It begins with Bacon’s scientific methodology, Galileo’s scientific discoveries, and Descartes’ search for epistemic certainty. It reaches a first peak with Newton’s scientific achievements and their theistic interpretations in the early 18th century, and then again, in a similar climate of debate with science (cosmology, biology), in the second half of the 20th century. It begins to decline with the philosophical critiques of Hume and Kant, the rise of philosophy of religion and the onto-theological alternatives of Hegel and Schelling. Notwithstanding its continuation and even revival in the analytic theism of the second half of the 20th century, it forfeits its scientific attractiveness by the shift from physics and astronomy to biology and the life sciences as the leading sciences of the day; its point through the demise of Cartesianism and transcendentalism, the discontent with mere epistemology, and the growing prominence of phenomenological and hermeneutical philosophies of life in contemporary philosophy; its philosophical persuasiveness by the insight that religious belief is warranted within a religious practice rather than in need of justification by a de-contextualised PT; its apologetic value due to its failure to communicate to an increasingly disinterested public a philosophically mediated understanding of Christian faith; and its public function by undermining the autonomy of morality, by being stripped of its claim to be an unavoidable truth for all reasonable persons, and by the plausible charge that its arguments further the very scepticism in religion which they seek to combat.

But this is not the whole story. When the de-contextualising approach to God in natural and rational theology collapsed under Hume’s and Kant’s criticisms, this

did not end the history of PT but marked a new beginning. The range of reactions to this crisis in effect defines the history of modern PT. We can distinguish at least five major developments or programmes of PT after the demise of Enlightenment theism, still operative in the 20th century, viz. *dogmatic PT* (philosophical theism), *critical PT* (philosophical theology), *idealist PT* (transcendental theism), *realist PT* (speculative theism), and (more indirectly and succeeding PT) *philosophy of religion*. They are not merely variations of the same but transformations into something new. But whereas *dogmatic PT* in effect continues the de-contextualising programme of natural and rational theology by trying to refute its refutations, the other four represent different attempts at re-contextualisation: in the practical contexts of the religious life of individuals or particular religious communities (*critical PT*); in the foundationalist contexts of transcendental idealism (*idealist PT*); in the ontological or cosmological contexts of speculative panentheism (*realist PT*), and in the manifold contexts of empirical and historical religions (*philosophy of religion*).

So in discussing PT before and after Kant there are at least five stories to be told. They all start with *the theistic project*, i.e. *natural* and *rational theology* as purely philosophical accounts of God based on grounds independent of Christian theology and the traditions of faith. They all run into the fundamental crises of philosophical theism in the wake of Hume and Kant. But then, in reacting differently to this crisis, they develop different programmes, which in their pros and cons still define the range of positions in PT at the beginning of the 21st century.

2. *Philosophical Theism*

Dogmatic PT (DPT) or *philosophical theism* begins as *natural* and *rational theology*, i.e. as the philosophical reaction to the Atheist denials of traditional religion and, at the same time, as a philosophical alternative to the confessional theologies of the time. It disintegrates in the wake of Hume's and Kant's refutations of its concept of God as incoherent, its arguments for God's existence as invalid, and its claims to provide an ultimate explanation of the universe superior to all alternatives as unfounded.

In the continental traditions the quest for ultimate explanation finds its place in the philosophical attempts of a transcendental foundation of human subjectivity (Fichte), or in philosophical (dialectical) materialism. In the Anglophone world, however, the situation is very different. Not only is DTP continued as unimpressed and undisturbed by those refutations as William Paley's *Natural Theology* was by Hume's critical arguments. It stays a life option and major battleground for philosophers of religion, even though it failed long ago to achieve its original end of providing a common theistic consensus for modern pluralist society (Jefferson). It is sometimes restated by distinguishing between a *natural* theology that is based only on premises accessible to observation and reason,

and a *philosophical* theology that also accepts doctrinal propositions among its premises as assumptions.² And it has even experienced a quite spectacular revival in the second half of the 20th century in *analytical theism* which has produced more and subtler versions of the traditional arguments for God's existence than any time before.

However, it's a philosophers' theoretical theism whose unending debate of the pros and cons of the theistic arguments is of little or no avail to a general religious public or the believers of traditional religions. It defends, or attacks, a de-contextualised concept of God as a personal, spiritual, eternal, free, omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent being, but hardly stops to think whether what it defends or attacks is worth defending or attacking. For even where it succeeds, it only shows the tradition-free Enlightenment concept of God to be coherent; and even where it can show a version of the theistic arguments to be valid, it can do so only in a purely formal way, i.e. within a particular system of logic or set of rules and assumptions. For example, Plantinga's "Victorious Modal Version" of the ontological argument³ which accepts as premise that "It is possible that maximal greatness is exemplified" not only can be shown to be valid only in S5 but not in other systems of modal logic, but also assumes without further argument that one should accept the former premise rather than "It is *not* possible that maximal greatness is exemplified" which would also produce as valid an argument in S5 but with the opposite conclusion.

So the story of PT along these lines moves *from foundationalism to formalism*: What began its career as the foundationalist project of natural and rational theology, is transformed into the formalism of arguments that are only valid within certain logical systems whose rules as well as the assumptions of the arguments formulated in their terms may or may not be accepted. The arguments become explorations of possibilities in specific logical systems, but they no longer can claim to refute the atheist by "proving" God's existence beyond doubt to any rational person.

What may look like a loss to the rational foundationalist opened up new avenues for PT and allowed various *confessional versions* of DPT to develop. If the concept of God used in the theistic arguments is not that of tradition-free natural or rational theology, but taken from a particular religious or theological tradition (Thomism, for example, or Calvinism, or a combination of both as in Reformed Epistemology), then what began as PT independent of, if not contrary to, confessional Christian theology is now transformed into a philosophical reflection and restatement of a particular confessional tradition (Anglican, Reformed or Roman Catholic, but in principle open to Jewish or Islamic versions as well). The story now moves from *foundationalism through formalism to confessionalism*, and PT becomes virtually indistinguishable from (a philosophically restricted version of) confessional systematic theology.

2 Kretzmann (1992).

3 Cf. Plantinga (1974) 213 ff.

Since DPT has served as the paradigm of PT, it deserves a closer analysis. Originally it arose in reaction to modern atheism whose basic tenets were (1) the doubt or negation of the existence of God, (2) the denial of a universe ordered by a caring mind or intelligence and not merely by natural laws, and (3) the affirmation of inexplicable evil and unjust suffering in the world as fundamental reasons against all belief in God. Each of these became, and has remained, a major concern and philosophical preoccupation of DPT.

1. DPT defends a *concept of God* succinctly summarised by Swinburne: By “God” theists understand something like a “person without a body (i.e. a spirit) who is eternal, free, able to do anything, knows everything, is perfectly good, is the proper object of human worship and obedience, the creator and sustainer of the universe.”⁴ This concept of God results from three basic motifs of theism, two of which are directed against the tenets of atheism, the third against the particularity of opposing religious traditions. First, there is the *cosmological motif*, which makes God, not matter-in-motion as in Hobbes, or energy, or some other natural force, the ultimate cause and explanation of the world. Second, there is the *religious motif*, which takes God to be not coextensive with the universe but transcendent, a personal being worthy of worship, able to act not only in creating the world but also in the created world, and hence free to respond to prayers. Finally, there is the *philosophical motif* of concentrating the conception of God on those aspects of belief in God on which Jews, Christians, and Moslems cannot agree to differ without falling into self-contradiction. All three motifs combine in conceptualising God and God’s relationship to the world by using certain models: the models of *Personal Explanation* in terms of actions and intentions, and of *Mind and Body*; the models of *Mind, Subject* and the *Elusive Self or Soul*; the models of *Personal Agency* and *Personal Communicator*. The models used determine the divine properties attributed to God such as infinity, eternity, freedom, omniscience, omnipotence, benevolence, creative activity, incorporeality, etc. These motifs, and the models of God based on them, are usually combined, and hence the analogy between human persons as finite, but free and creative moral agents, and God as the Supreme Creative and Beneficent Agent becomes the key element in this conception of God.

2. The coherence of this concept of God is required for the second major component of DPT: its *arguments for the existence of God*. To show a Supreme Creative and Beneficent Agent to be possible is not enough; there must be good reasons for asserting the existence of such a being. Thus arguments for and against the existence of God, in particular ontological and cosmological arguments, as well as arguments from design, have been, and still are, a major topic of DPT. In their different ways they all argue

4 Swinburne (1993) 1.

- (a) that the concept of God is coherent and the existence of such a supreme being is possible (arguments for the possibility of God);
- (b) that such a being actually exists either because it absolutely must (ontological arguments for the necessity of God) or has to, given the existence and character of the world (cosmological arguments and arguments from design for the actuality of God);
- (c) that there can only be one such being, because the unity and singularity of the world allows for only one creator and providential lord of nature and history (arguments for the singularity of God).

The three sets of problems of the *possibility*, *necessity* and/or *actuality*, and *singularity* of God are central to DPT and have remained at the focus of its debates until the present day. For the question of the possibility of God implies fundamental questions about meaning, the coherence of concepts, and the use of words; the question of the necessity and/or actuality of God fundamental questions about logic, ontology, cosmology and the character of the world; and the question of the singularity of God raises fundamental questions about the unity and plurality of worlds, the difference between actual and possible worlds, and the identity of individuals in different worlds. Thus DPT places its construction of God at the centre of philosophical debate with intimate links to virtually every philosophical topic.

Arguments for the existence of God are a central but not the only area of epistemic debate in DPT. For how can we know about God and God's relation to the world? Neither God nor the world are phenomena or (actual or possible) data of experience. Only myths present gods as phenomena, but God is not one of the gods, and philosophy is not mythology. Similarly, only a naive realism understands the world as the most complex thing that there is, but the totality of things is not a thing, and, for the theist, as Swinburne points out, "the world" can only mean "all logically contingent things apart from God" or, in a narrower sense, "all physical things which are spatially related to the earth."⁵ But then the relationship between God and the world is different in kind from any relationship between things in the world, and perceiving and knowing things in the world must be different in kind from knowing God. Yet if God cannot be perceived in fact, God is no *datum* (actual existent), and if God cannot be perceived in principle, God is no *dabile* (possible existent). Consequently, knowledge about God cannot be inferred from what we know in experience because we can argue from things experienced to things that might be experienced, but not to something that is beyond our experience altogether. But if God is no *dabile*, it seems as if God could only be a *cogitabile*.⁶ "God is not" as Kant put it, "a Being outside of me, but merely a thought

⁵ Swinburne (1993) 129–130.

⁶ Wagner (1986) 575 ff.

within me.”⁷ Yet it is not an arbitrary thought because the tendency of our mind to see the world of experience as a unified and connected whole naturally leads us to explain it in terms of “an all-sufficient necessary cause” or God. We only have to be careful not to reify this regulative principle and mistake it for an actual entity. The ideal of a unity in the explanation of the world may be necessary, but it “is not an assertion of an existence necessary in itself.”⁸

Recently, Reformed Epistemologists such as Alvin Plantinga have combined the Calvinist *sensus divinitatis* tradition with the common sense realism of Thomas Reid and argued that belief in God is a properly basic belief that may be part of the foundation of a person’s noetic structure. According to Plantinga, (Christian) belief in God is rational, reasonable, justifiable, and ultimately warranted to accept, because humans not only have natural cognitive faculties, such as perception, memory or reflection that allow us to gather knowledge about objects, but also a natural cognitive faculty that enables us to form basic beliefs about God.⁹ Moreover, the concept of God differs from all other concepts in that we cannot accept it as coherent and remain agnostic about whether it is actually instantiated or not: God is either impossible or a logically necessary being for it “is a conceptual truth that any possibly necessary being is actual.”¹⁰ So as long as it is not shown that the concept of God is incoherent, or that belief in God is without warrant or deficient in some other respect because it is not formed by properly functioning cognitive faculties, believers should be judged according to the forensic principle “innocent until proven guilty”: “Our beliefs are rational unless we have reasons for refraining; they are not nonrational unless we have reasons *for* believing.”¹¹

This puts the burden of argument on the critic, not on the believer. If Christian belief in God is generated through reliable processes (religious perception, *sensus divinitatis*, participation in the life of the Christian community, the workings of the Holy Spirit etc.), as Plantinga, Alston or Wolterstorff have argued in their different ways, Christians are rational in believing—just as sceptics, agnostics or atheists are rational in not believing—in God even where they know that God is beyond anything that can be conceptualised. However, it is a highly problematic move to conceptualise this existential reliance on God’s presence and reality as the conceptual truth that any possibly necessary being is actual. This not only confuses believing in God *without grounds* with believing in God *on necessary grounds that cannot be denied*. The cogency of this argument also depends on the interpretation of the notion of the possibility of

7 Immanuel Kant, *Opus Postumum*, Kants handschriftlicher Nachlaß, vol. 8, 1936, 145.

8 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 647.

9 Plantinga (2000) 167–353.

10 Ward (1982) 26.

11 Wolterstorff (1983) 163.

God as meaning: “Possibly it is necessary that there is a God,” rather than “Possibly it is not necessary that there is a God.” But there seem to be no theoretical or *a priori* reasons for choosing one of the two interpretations rather than the other.¹² So either theists are forced to fall back on some version of the cosmological argument. Or they agree with Swinburne that the non-existence of God is logically compatible with the existence of the universe, and then take recourse to some version of the argument from design. Since this presupposes an argument to design in the light of the ambiguities of our actual experience of beauty and order as well as evil and suffering in the world it requires a closer consideration of the *problem of evil*.

3. The *problem of evil* in the specific form of *theodicy* is one of the preoccupations of DPT. Horrendous evil, pain, suffering, and injustice in the world constitute a fundamental threat and insurmountable stumbling block for DPT because they lead us to question the nature and reality of God. In Epicurus’ old questions rephrased by Hume: “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?”¹³ Posed in this way the problem of evil is transformed into a problem of the logical compatibility of certain beliefs about God and the world, i.e., the beliefs that:

- (a) God exists;
- (b) God is omnipotent;
- (c) God is omniscient;
- (d) God is wholly good;
- (e) There exists evil in the world.

This is a theoretical problem, and it has a number of theoretical solutions.¹⁴ If we drop (a) or (e), the problem does not arise; if we give up the idea of infinity in (b) to (d), the problem disappears. Less radical solutions attempt to reject the alleged incompatibility in various ways. Thus Plantinga has argued,¹⁵ that beliefs (a) to (d) do not entail that God does not create, or has no reason to create, beings who perform evil deeds, and he takes this to be a *defence* of God, i.e. of the compatibility of the view of God outlined with the reality of evil in the world, but not a *theodicy*, i.e. an explanation of the fact and amount of evil in the actual world created by God. Others argue that the existence of some evil is necessary for the existence of certain sorts of values and second-order goods; that the existence of morally free agents necessarily entails the

12 Cf. Dalferth (1992) 202–213, 219–224.

13 David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Kemp Smith 1947, 147, pt. X.

14 Cf. Dalferth (1981) 538 ff.

15 Plantinga (1965), (1967) chs. 5 and 6, (1974) ch. 9, and (1975).

possibility of moral evil (“Free Will Defence”); or that an infinite number of actions and interactions, both between agents in the world and between worldly agents and God, necessarily produces effects beyond the control of any individual agent, including God (Hartshorne).

However, all theoretical reflection can hope to show is “that no amount of evil will contradict the existence of a perfect God, as long as the requirement is met, that it is necessarily implied in the existence of a world which leads to overwhelming good.”¹⁶ But the world gives little reason to suppose that this is the case. If we had reason to believe in the existence, power, wisdom and goodness of God, we could agree with Leibniz that this is compatible with the evil and suffering in the world. But Hume has shown that we have little or no reason to infer these beliefs from our ambiguous experiences of the world, and Kant has shown that (a) through (d) are not the sort of beliefs whose truth could even in principle be established by theoretical reason.

So DPT indeed faces a dilemma. The compatibility of belief in God with our experience of the world is not enough to justify belief in God: we need independent arguments to sustain this belief. But the arguments of rational and natural theology for the existence of God do not stand up to examination. Natural theology breaks down because, given the facts of evil, it cannot prove that our world is intelligible in a way that unambiguously points to God, and rational theology breaks down because it cannot make plausible why God should necessarily exist rather than necessarily not exist.

DPT stands or falls with its arguments for the existence of God. But even where it presents valid arguments in a given system of logic, it cannot succeed because of its de-contextualised conception of God. To conceptualise beliefs about God irrespective of their experiential and doctrinal contexts can only result in misconceptions. DPT fails because it begins with abstractions and ends by committing what Whitehead has called the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness.”

It is not enough, therefore, for the defenders of DPT to refute the philosophical criticisms of its arguments by ever refined logical reconstructions. What is needed is rather to stop the de-contextualising approach of DPT and re-contextualise its arguments in the context of, e.g., specific religious traditions.

3. *Philosophical Theology*

Critical PT (CPT) is Kant’s constructive alternative to DPT after the collapse of natural and rational theology. In contrast to the “biblical theology” of the “scholar of Scripture” (*Schriftgelehrte*) which is based on the statutory faith of the church (*Kirchenglauben*),

¹⁶ Ward (1982) 206–207.

the CPT of the “scholar of reason” (*Vernunftgelehrte*) deals with “religious faith proper” (*Religionsglauben*) that is based on the “interior moral laws which can be derived from the [practical] reason of every human being.” Whereas the *Kirchenglaube* is always contingent, particular, and plural, the *Religionsglaube* is necessarily universal and unique: one reason, one idea of God, one religion.¹⁷ So Kant replaces DPT by a CPT that is re-contextualised in the moral life of individuals in their inescapable need of intellectual, moral and religious orientation. Kant’s CPT is not merely meant to criticise the pitfalls of traditional philosophical and “ecclesiastical” theologies but also to provide the individual with moral arguments for religion—or rather: a religious enforcement of morality—without, however, interfering with the public practice of the accepted religion. Based on the distinction between private and public religion, it is aimed at helping the individual to decide for himself or herself what to think of religion, and whether or not to participate in the public practice of religion.

In the preface to the first edition of *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* Kant defends a PT “within the boundaries of mere reason” that was critical and not foundational, based on autonomous reason and not on the teachings of the Bible regarded as divine revelations, and whose business was not to interfere with public religion but to provide moral orientation by interpreting all religion as “the sum of all our duties regarded as divine *Commands* as such.”¹⁸ PT in this sense, Kant insists,

must have complete freedom to expand as far as its science reaches, provided that it stays within the boundaries of mere reason and makes indeed use of history, languages, the books of all peoples, even the Bible, in order to confirm and explain its propositions, but only for itself, without carrying these propositions over into biblical theology or wishing to modify its public doctrines.¹⁹

It is indispensable not so much for the public faith of the church but for private religion, i.e. our individual need for religious enforcement of moral orientation. As long as they stick to these critical and moral functions of PT, Kant argues in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, members of the lower philosophical faculty can legitimately practise PT without trespassing their competence and interfering with clerical theology (the theological practice of clergymen in the “welfare of souls”) or the scholarly biblical theology practised in the higher faculty of theology.²⁰

17 Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, A 43–46.

18 *The Conflict of the Faculties*, A 44–45, ed. Guyer & Wood, 262, 300–301.

19 Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* 61, 655–656.

20 Cf. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* 61, 655–656 and 62, 656; *The Conflict of the Faculties* 262, 300–301. Cf. Derrida (1990) 397–438; de Vries (2002) 18–122.

A generation later Schleiermacher gives Kant's CPT a constructive twist and new application. In his *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, he organises the study of theology into three branches: *philosophical*, *historical* and *practical theology*. The first has the task of identifying and determining the object of theological study and inquiry: Christianity or the life of the Christian community (church) in its present confessional (Protestant, Roman Catholic etc.) manifestations. The second outlines the ways in which we can gain justifiable ("scientific") knowledge about it: by exploring the historical manifestations of Christian faith, life and practice in exegetical theology, church history, church statistics and dogmatics. The third shows what this knowledge is good for: it enables us to act in a critical and self-controlled way for the good of the church. Each branch deals with a particular question that needs to be asked by anyone studying or teaching theology: What is the subject matter of theological knowledge (What is it *knowledge about*)? What and how can we know about it (What *kind of knowledge* is theology)? What is the point of seeking this knowledge (What is it *knowledge for*)? Whereas historical theology constitutes the body of theological study, practical theology provides the "rules of art" for church service and church government, and PT relates the theological enterprise to philosophy and science. It is that branch of (Protestant) theology whose task is to determine, on the one hand, the "essence of Christianity" by marking it off against other religions (as *apologetics*) and, on the other, the nature of Protestantism by distinguishing it from other confessional traditions of Christianity (as *polemics*). It is still a critical discipline that draws distinctions and delineates limitations, both with respect to external differences (as *apologetics*) and internal divisions (as *polemics*). But in doing so it helps to determine the subject matter of theology by placing Christianity in the cultural context of religions and Protestantism in the religious context of Christianity.

In Schleiermacher's view PT is indispensable not so much for philosophy (as in DPT) nor for private religion (as in Kant) but for Christian theology. The study of theology demands an answer to the question of what is (to be) studied in theology. If we answer "Protestant theology," i.e. (more fully) "Protestant Christian theology," then this has to be construed, according to Schleiermacher, in terms of the relevant *genus proximum* ("the essence of Christianity") and *differentia specifica* (Protestantism), and it is the task of PT to clarify and determine these notions. Now the "essence of Christianity" cannot be construed as an ideal object or idea by mere philosophical thought or "speculation" (Christianity is a historical phenomenon, not a philosophical idea), nor can it simply be read off the empirical data by empirical and historical research (before we can do so we need some idea of which data are manifestations of the Christian faith). So PT is neither one of the *speculative disciplines* that explore the knowledge of ideas or of the essence of things in nature and culture such as physics (the speculative knowledge of nature) or ethics (the speculative knowledge of culture). Nor is it one of the *scientific disciplines* that seek empirical knowledge of existence, i.e. of

what there is in nature and culture, such as natural science (the empirical knowledge of nature) or historical science (the empirical knowledge of culture or *Geschichtskunde*). Rather PT is one of the *critical disciplines* which connect the historical phenomena with speculation in order to judge how the individual appearances hold as presentations of the idea.²¹ PT achieves this in two steps. As *apologetics* it determines the general idea or set of ideas which Christianity is seen to instantiate: It is the idea of a *pious community* or *church* as described in the *Christian Faith* by the propositions borrowed from ethics. All historical phenomena of Christianity can be understood as particular determinations of this idea, i.e., as manifestations of *Christian* pious communities or the *Christian church*. However, since these manifestations are not only diverse but involve distortions and aberrations, PT as *polemics* seeks to distinguish proper manifestations of Christianity from heretical and schismatic aberrations, and differentiate within the proper manifestations between characteristic confessional types of the Christian church (Protestantism, Roman Catholicism). Thus in Protestant theology we study—moving from the specific to the more general—phenomena of *Protestant* (rather than Roman Catholic or Orthodox) Christian religious culture, *Christian* (rather than Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist etc.) religious culture, *religious* culture (rather than science, economy, or politics), *culture* (or ethics, rather than nature). Step by step the underlying idea of culture (cultural community) is thus further determined or specified, and it is the task of PT to relate what is studied in Protestant theology to this wider context by outlining the relevant *genus proximum* (the essence of *Christianity* rather than of some other religion) and the *differentia specifica* (the *Protestant* form of Christianity).

We only have to apply the same idealist method of conceptual explication to the idea of the essence of Christianity to see how Schleiermacher arrives at the feeling of absolute dependence as the lynch-pin of the coherence of this re-contextualisation process of PT: Christian life, according to Schleiermacher, is a contingent form or determination of religious life; all Christian life is religious, but not vice versa. Religious life, on the other hand, is a particular manifestation of a necessary form or determination of feeling. It is particular as a manifestation of piety (and not some other determination of feeling such as art or music), and it is necessary because piety is a particular determination of the feeling of utter dependence without which there is no human life. More precisely, whereas there are other determinations of feeling than piety, piety is not so much a particular determination of feeling but a determination of a particular feeling, i.e., the feeling of utter dependence. (This is the crucial and problematic step in Schleiermacher's argument.) So feeling is not all there is to human life (there is also knowing and acting) but there is no human life without the feeling of utter dependence, and hence without some form of piety. This is why the operations of PT, in the last resort, show the study

21 Cf. F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Entwurf eines Systems der Sittenlehre*, part III, vol. 5, 1835, 70–71.

of Protestant theology (and all other forms of theology that can be construed along these lines) be grounded in a basic structure of human life and hence indispensable for a proper understanding of human life and existence. It is not something of interest only to Protestants or perhaps to Christians but of universal significance for all human beings: it exemplifies in a historically contingent way a universal structure of human existence.

Schleiermacher re-contextualised CPT within Protestant theology by proposing that it should be conceived as a theological discipline alongside historical and practical theology. Although he did not really succeed with respect to the syllabus of theological education, the line of thought opened up in this way developed into a practice of philosophical reflection *in* theology (sometimes called “fundamental theology”) whose point is a twofold task: it explores and unfolds the internal grammar and plausibility-structures of a particular tradition of Christian life, faith, and practice (e.g., Protestantism), and it relates it to the wider cultural and/or scientific context of its time. This can be done either from the inside or the outside, i.e. be practised as a philosophical *theology* or as a *philosophical* theology. The former is a theological enterprise that is located within a particular communal tradition of faith and explicates its grammar in terms that are accessible to those who do not belong to and participate in it. The later is a philosophical enterprise that views it from the outside (i.e., without necessarily participating in it), describes and analyses its “grammatical” structures and conceptual options and relates them to the cultural context of this religious practice. The first route is typically taken by *confessional versions* of CPT, the second route by *liberal versions*. Between them they cover the majority of philosophers of religion and theologians in the 20th century who have offered versions of CPT, some more constructive (Tillich, Kaufmann, Brümmer), others in a more tentative and explorative way (MacKinnon). So the story of CPT runs from the *breakdown of dogmatic foundationalism through individualist moralism and communitarian confessionalism to a reflected theological culturalism*: The function of PT is not merely to provide the individual believer with a critical religious enforcement of his or her moral orientation (as in Kant), nor is it simply a way of unfolding the internal structure of a confessional tradition from within in philosophical terms, but a philosophical account of the place of religion and theology in a specific cultural matrix, and an exploration of the options in that matrix that can be accepted without contradiction.

4. *Transcendental Theism*

Kant redefined the agenda of PT in more than one way. By showing the traditional onto-, cosmo-, and teleological arguments for the existence of God to be inconclusive, inconsistent, or based on untenable premises, he opened the door not only to CPT, but also to a critical transcendentalism that became the starting-point of various *idealist* and

speculative versions of PT; and he paved the way towards modern *philosophy of religion* which no longer concentrates on *God* but on *religion*.

Idealist or subjectivist PT (ITP) combines Kant's criticism of Enlightenment DPT with a continuation of its quest for ultimate explanation in the context of a philosophy of transcendental subjectivity (Fichte). It accepts Kant's move from the empirical I to the transcendental I in his critical refocusing of philosophy from metaphysical *de facto* questions to transcendental *de jure* questions; it also follows him in conceiving God to be neither a *datum* nor a *dabile* of experience but a *cogitabile* that plays an indispensable unifying role in human knowledge; it also accepts the primacy of practical over theoretical reason; but it goes beyond Kant in taking the transcendental I as the creative centre of all human activity and, as such, the autonomous unifying ground of all human knowing and doing; and it offers not only a performative account of the transcendental I but an idealist *relecture* of Kant's critical differentiation of various types of reason (theoretical, practical, esthetical).

The upshot is an IPT that restricts what is legitimate in theology to that which can be shown to be certain in terms of transcendental subjectivity: Truth is replaced by certainty, and certainty is restricted to that which can in principle be made, and hence known how to be made, by ourselves and which is necessarily presupposed in all our making, viz. *God*, the necessary condition of all our acting, thinking and believing. Since nothing what we believe is such that it could not have been the case that we believe it, not what we believe but only how we believe can stand the test of transcendental subjectivity: Certainty in religious and all other matters is restricted to how we believe, not what we believe; all that matters is our *belief* in God, not our belief *in God*. So all theistic arguments for the existence of God are taken to be simply beside the point. What needs to be shown is not whether God exists (or that "God exists" is true), but rather that we are justified *in believing*—not in believing *something* (some contingent or even some necessary truth), but in *believing tout court*. The I is the rock on which everything is to be built.²²

5. *Speculative Theism*

Realist or speculative PT (RPT) is a realist reaction to the idealist philosophy of transcendental subjectivity. It attempts to integrate the theistic quest for ultimate explanations in terms of God, the critique of natural and rational theology, and the epistemological insights of ITP into a more comprehensive realist approach. God is not conceived, as in IPT, as (intentional) object of human consciousness or necessary condition of the possibility of human knowledge and certainty. Rather God is the ultimate or absolute

22 For a critical discussion of this view, cf. Dalferth (2003) part II, ch. 3.

subject that makes itself conceived by human consciousness through creating what can be conceived (the possible), what is conceived (the actual), and the very process of its conceiving in a progressive dialectical integration of everything true, good, and beautiful into a final synthesis of subject and object, God as knowing us and God as known by us. Only, as Hegel put it, if God is conceived not merely as substance (object) but as the true subject of all knowledge, including all knowledge of God, God is really appreciated as a *living God* and not merely as a possible or necessary object of human thought.²³ RPT, in short, is not a continuation of IPT as often mistakenly thought but its realist critique and correction.

This realist programme has been worked out most prominently in Hegel's dialectical process ontology of the progressive self-realisation of the Absolute in the history of the world; in Schelling's philosophy of revelation as God's development from abstract existence to concrete reality in the evolution of the world; or, in the 20th century, in Whitehead's and Hartshorne's process cosmologies. They all aim, in their different ways, at a realist and all-inclusive account of God's relations to the world and the world's relations to God. They all belong to a speculative programme of PT whose story runs from *realist reactions* to the idealist replacements of DPT by transcendental and subjectivist IPT to an *all-inclusive panentheism*. And both in its ontological (Hegel, Schelling) and cosmological (Whitehead, Hartshorne) versions this is achieved by the highly problematic move of basing RPT on a realist or ontological interpretation of a given form of logic. Thus Hegel arrives at his dialectical ontology by a realist reading of the *sylogistic pattern* of concept, judgement and inference: He interprets the transmission of truth from true premises to a true conclusion in a valid deductive argument as a real movement of truth from thesis through antithesis to synthesis in which the truth of the conclusion is constituted by integrating the partial truths of the major and minor premises. Whitehead, on the other hand, derives his process metaphysics from a realist interpretation of the *logic of relations* of the *Principia Mathematica* in that his actual entities are construed as self-realising relations in which "[t]he many become one, and are increased by one."²⁴ And Hartshorne, finally, interprets the relativity of God and world or the dependence of the world on God realistically as "the ontological correlate of the logical relation of entailment."²⁵ Whereas Wittgenstein rightly insisted in the *Tractatus* that logical signs, constants or connectives do not represent anything (4.0312), i.e. are not to be understood semantically or ontologically but only pragmatically as indicating operations that can be performed with propositions, Hartshorne's neoclassical PT is based on an ontological reading of *logical entailment*: If it is true that q is entailed by p, i.e. $L(p \rightarrow q)$, then it is impossible that p is true and q is false

23 Cf. Dalferth (2001) 177–182.

24 Whitehead (1978) 21.

25 Hartshorne (1964) 9.

($\neg M[p \ \& \ \neg q]$). Understood ontologically this means that if $L(p \rightarrow \textit{God exists})$, then $\neg M(p \ \& \ \neg \textit{God exists})$, at least if “God” is a possible (or coherent) and not an impossible (or incoherent) concept. But then God’s existence is logically entailed by every actual existence: If anything exists at all, then God exists.

This is not to be mistaken for a version of the cosmological argument. RPT bases its arguments not on *a posteriori* considerations about facts and actualities but on *a priori* considerations about possibilities and compossibilities. It starts neither from the self and its factual ideas nor from the world and its factual structures but from more formal and more general considerations about categorical and metaphysical truths that exclude no positive possibility and apply positively to any actuality.²⁶ Thus it rests knowledge about God not on the proposition “I exist” but on the more general “Something exists”; and it claims a necessary relationship not between God and this actual world but between God and one world or another: not the existence of this world but “the existence of any world at all is what proves God”;²⁷ God is not inferred from but implied by everything that is because “To be is to be known by God”;²⁸ and if it is possible that God exists, then God exists necessarily.

This raises at least two problems. The first is that the force of this kind of argument depends on the truth of the premise that God’s existence is possible. But why assume the possibility of God’s existence rather than the possibility of God’s non-existence? Without being antecedently persuaded of the existence of God in one way or another RPT’s arguments for God’s necessary existence do not get off the ground.²⁹

But there is a second problem. Since the necessary does not entail the contingent, God cannot be merely necessary if he is to explain the universe; but neither can he be merely contingent if he is to be distinguished from the world. So God must be in some respects both necessary and contingent.³⁰ Whitehead and Hartshorne try to capture this idea in a dipolar conception of God. In his “primordial nature” God is the necessary, changeless and eternal realm of potentiality, the totality of unrealised possibilities. In his “consequent nature” he is the changing realm of actuality, the all-inclusive container of the real. God’s two natures are related not directly, but indirectly through the world-process. This, however, risks reducing God to an *aliquid mundi*, a mere abstract structure of a world-process that permanently provides the possibilities for the creative advance into novelty and permanently integrates what has become actual into the unity of his being.

26 Hartshorne (1962).

27 Hartshorne (1967) 83.

28 Hartshorne (1962) 296.

29 Dalferth (1992) 192–212.

30 Ward (1982) 8.

Ward therefore suggested a different solution. God is not a dipolar correlation of necessity and contingency but rather the common originator of both necessity and contingency, “the one self-existent being in whom creation and necessity originate and in whom they are reconciled.”³¹ Swinburne, on the other hand, gives the contingent primacy over the necessary in God. The existence of God is the ultimate “brute fact” which explains everything but has itself no explanation.³² The ultimate explanation of the contingent universe is a personal one, which explains the phenomena by an action of a person, and the beliefs and intentions which govern it.

But given what we know about the world, the idea of a personal explanation of it has little initial probability, as Mackie has pointed out.³³ And even if we accept it as the only possible ultimate explanation, why should we not then conceive the world itself in personal terms? The issue turns on our model of the world, which is not something given in experience, but the idea of the totality of interacting realities that can be experienced. We can use a number of models, including that of a person, to conceptualise this idea. Not all such models are compatible with a Christian understanding of creation, of course. But this is not the idea that RPT seeks to conceptualise.

6. *Philosophy of Religion*

Philosophy of Religion (PR), finally, has been the most promising and productive heir to DPT but one that in fact supersedes the history of PT as conceived. Its basic move has been to refocus philosophical reflection from *God* to *religion*, i.e., re-contextualise the notion of God in the religious practices in which it is incorporated, and this has opened up a whole new agenda for philosophy. There is no direct philosophical (rational or natural) access to God in isolation, i.e. apart from being the object of worship and religious belief. Therefore philosophical reflection must start from religion, i.e. the communal practice of belief in God, and not from a de-contextualised concept of God that is abstracted from the doctrinal scheme of Christian theology and used in philosophical attempts of “ultimate explanation” that disregards the manifold ways in which concepts, pictures and metaphors of God function in religious practices to provide orientation in life. But elucidating this life-orienting capacity of religious belief and practice is the central task of PT/PR, as such seminal thinkers as Pascal, Kierkegaard or Wittgenstein have shown. So PR, construed in their way, can be seen as an attempt to re-contextualise the whole agenda of PT in the actual life of religions, and this seems to be the really promising route to take for PT after the collapse of DPT.

31 Ward (1982) 3.

32 Swinburne (1979) 92.

33 Mackie (1982) 100–101.

However, PR has also been understood and practiced in different ways, and in a sense all the problems that arose in PT recur in a new guise. It concentrates on religion understood as a universal human phenomenon, or as a specific form of human culture, or as a particular historical religion, or as the actual and irreducible plurality of religions. So the story of PR ranges from *subjectivist through culturalist, confessional and pluralist to criteriological or grammatical versions*, i.e. from concern with a universal concept of religion as the fundamental relation of finite to infinite that is seen to lie at the root of all religions (U. Barth); or concern for religion as a particular form of common life in the wider context of human culture (Cassirer, Nygren); through inquiries into the internal rationality of a particular religious practice and tradition (Judaism in Rosenzweig, Roman Catholicism in Lonergan, Anglicanism in A. Farrer, Reformed Christianity in A. Plantinga); to cognitive accounts of the plurality of religions as different phenomenal ways of referring to the same noumenal “Real” (J. Hick³⁴); or descriptive approaches to the various ways and plural aspects of religious beliefs and practices to provide the orientation in life that characterises a given religion (a contemplative PR in the tradition of Wittgenstein, Rhees and Phillips). The reflections of such PR are not themselves religious reflections nor are they normally based on particular religious convictions (though they may be) but they are always located within a religious practice and tradition and they view other religious orientations not from nowhere or anywhere but from that perspective.

7. *A Possible Future?*

In many versions, PT has been practised as the mistaken attempt to provide religious orientation itself—a better, more comprehensive, more rational, better justified orientation than a particular religious tradition of lived and practised communal faith is allegedly supposed to do. That is true of the foundationalist versions of philosophical theism (DPT), subjective transcendentalism (IPT), realist panentheism (RPT) as well as the directive versions of philosophy of religion. However, only a PT along the lines of CPT or a philosophy of religion that understands its task to be the descriptive and contemplative exploration of the grammar of a particular religious practice in the context of the wider culture of today will be able to provide the orientation in thought about religious orientation in life that will be helpful to overcome puzzles and confusions by showing possible ways out of practical confusions.

It is the task of philosophical reflection to explore possibilities of orientation (“life options”) in the face of puzzles and problems that arise in life; and it is the task of philosophy of religion to explore possibilities of religious orientation (“religious

34 Hick (1989).

options”) in the face of puzzles and problems that arise in, or with respect to, specific religious beliefs and practices. But it is not its task to provide religious orientation itself or mistake its own philosophical (descriptive) role with that of theological (normative) reflection in a particular religious tradition. Philosophical reflection is not directive or foundational, but descriptive and orienting, and it orients *in thinking* by exploring options and possibilities, and not *in life* by providing direction and giving advice. Its task is not that of religion or theology, but of philosophical reflection in and about religion. Theology misses its point by not being normative, philosophy, on the other hand, by trying to be so.

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HEIKKI KIRJAVAINEN

Symbol Meaning and Logical Form: A Study
in the Semantics of Religious Language

1. *Introduction*

The problem of logical or conceptual form pertaining to meanings of religious expressions is often seen to culminate in the question of whether religious language is semantically autonomous or *sui generis*. Despite the way this claim of autonomy is formulated, it has been quite a popular conception that religious language entails its own “logic” or “grammar”, which is more or less independent of the conceptual rules or norms valid for other parts of natural language. On the other hand and contrary to the autonomy view, many contemporary philosophers of religion have emphasised promoting a special metaphysical or epistemological argument for a presentable-at-court semantics of religious language. This mainly theistic approach tries to give a proof for religious language in terms of common rationality and is at least as popular as the autonomy view. In this article I will argue, somewhat indirectly, for a rather critical response to both of these popular conceptions. Accordingly, if I am right, the predominant part of today’s philosophy of religion has been badly misplaced in its efforts to meet the challenges arising from mainstream philosophy. The majority of the contributions presented have had next to nothing to offer to warrant interest from the mainstream. In my view, the heart of the matter lies in the question: what is supposed to take precedence in philosophy of religion—logic and semantics or some other starting point? My own vantage point is semantic throughout; no specific metaphysical or epistemological argument is offered to support my views, although arguments of that sort are keenly acknowledged. Therefore, contrary to what has been mostly the case in contemporary philosophical discussions on religious issues, my argument is neither for an autonomous nor non-autonomous rationality of religious language but for tools for analysing them.

Since the alleged thesis of the autonomy of religious language implies the question of logical form, I will start by (1) introducing the background for a systematic examination of the problem of logical form. It turns out that the notion of *symbol meaning* involves a crucial problem in the context of logical form, especially for the demarcation between logical and non-logical terms. Next I will proceed by (2) illustrating a historical example concerning the logical form of primitive terms. My main task (3) will be to show that the logical form of religious discourse, at least on the first order level, can be better

explicated with certain avantgarde logico-semantical tools than with surrendering to the temptation of the aforementioned popular tendency of drawing extreme fideistic conclusions. Finally, I will conclude my discussion by (4) hinting at some general methodological points relevant particularly to philosophy of religion. In this sense, I hope, the article will help to clarify acceptable guidelines for a systematic task in philosophy of religion.

2. *Starting with the Logical Form of Symbol Meaning*

It may sound a bit presumptuous to say that all the basic problems in philosophy remain the same. This saying as such is not true. Nevertheless, it is truly astonishing to realise how similar certain basic problems faced in the philosophical discussion during the Middle Ages are to those now. Notwithstanding that the similarity might sometimes prove to be superficial, if we examine certain historical details more closely, the basic problem on the logical level may still remain very much the same over time. I have in mind a certain specific problem which serves as a spectrum for a number of philosophical issues. Even when this problem was not discussed under the following heading during the Middle Ages, the name can nevertheless be correctly applied to scholastic discussions on meaning. The problem is that of a symbol meaning. Today this label is used as a common technical term,¹ but I will take it here as implying the problem of meaning in its wider philosophical garments, specifically when it comes to the meaning of primitive sentences. We can take all symbol meanings as formal (as they are taken in the syntactical treatment of formal logic) but of course that does not solve their semantics. The semantical problem involved here starts with the straightforward question: What is meaning entailed by a non-logical symbol expression?² Since the symbol meaning is supposed to be handled with *a logical theory*, it leads to another question: What is the underlying logic (logical form) of symbol meanings? Responding to this question brings us to what is called the analysis of symbol meaning within the framework of first order extensional logic.

It has been customary from ancient times to think that for an expression to have meaning, there has to be a connection between the expression and our ability to understand the expression. Therefore, what we seem to be after is conceivability in its most basic context. Surprisingly or not, regarding symbol meaning in terms of

- 1 In 'symbol meaning' is normally included all roles of symbols in formal logic; here, the meaning of non-logical constants and variables is primarily at stake.
- 2 In order to trace the philosophical problem of a symbol meaning we have to realise that not only non-logical constants and variables have the status of symbols in formal language but atomic expressions of natural language have this status as well. During the Middle Ages, Latin was usually taken as a formal language in this sense.

conceivability, there is not very much to tell since the ancient days.³ The question was: How can we conceive the basic syntactic items, namely primitive symbols, in such a way that their semantical and logical roles are not violated when these symbols are used for analysing natural language in its task of representation? The question was answered by the typical double-element theory of meaning as early as Plato and Aristotle. Meaning is composed of two factors: the idea (concept, intension, “*Sinn*” located in the mind) and reference (extension, “*Bedeutung*” located in the external world). All theories since then until the present day have been occupied with the multiple interactions between these two factors. That references are located in the mind-independent external world can be accepted without much effort, especially if the role of terms is reduced to names, but how are other meaning components, viz., intensions to be dealt with? If we take primitive expressions of language as symbols (whether mental or linguistic), what is then the nature of the link between these symbols and what they are symbols of?⁴ Defining this very *link* is to establish meaning in its basic form, i.e., it is to set up the basic semantical relation. For free individual and predicate variables, this amounts to finding the route to their extensions; for free sentence variables, this is to show what the world is like, if the sentence is true. These procedures are what we can call binding the variables.⁵ All the different proposals for rendering the link in question can be seen as explaining the role of “intensional factors” assigning the entity in the world.⁶ How much does the analysis of “intensional factors” belong to a logical theory as a matter of logical form and how much is it a part of epistemological or metaphysical considerations?

- 3 Dropping out the Aristotelian notion of conceivability, as a metaphysical relation, by the late medieval period nominalism was one turning point; replacing the various candidates of constant semantic relations by game-like practical relations in late Wittgenstein is the other most remarkable milestone.
- 4 Syntactically speaking, these symbols are individual constants/variables, predicate constants/variables and sentence variables. The so-called meaning theories try to answer how these different constants and variables are able to represent the things in the world.
- 5 It turns out that explaining the role of bound variables presupposes two kinds of procedures: determination of the reference in different worlds and determination of identity (“cross-identification perspectival and public”). See Hintikka (1996a).
- 6 In a broad sense ‘intensional factors’ are in general all those ways in which an extension is given or for which an expression holds true. Just to mention a few main lines of thought, the link between the term and the world is said to consist of “substantial forms” (Aristotle), “absolute” mental terms (Ockham), intuitive or hermeneutic (Gadamer), phenomenological reductions “*Verständnisse*” (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur), ostensions or behavioural features (Quine, Davidson), “internally” definite descriptions (Putnam), neurological events (Fodor), psychological structures of “transformational grammar” (Chomsky), “language games” (Wittgenstein), and “finite” games on the move (Kusch).

Let me be a bit more specific about what I have in mind while at the same time introducing a certain dilemma here. It is quite obvious that what loomed before the eyes of all such logicians as Abelard, Scotus, Ockham, Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, Quine and Tarski⁷ was that in order to satisfy the needs of a logical theory, the basic non-logical terms have, not only to convey a relatively clear, simple and direct connection to what these terms represent, but to preserve sound logical connections as well. Accordingly, primitive or atomic expressions (“categorematic terms”), *taken syntactically* as non-logical constants and variables, have to satisfy the needs of those very same expressions *taken semantically*, that is, as what they are representations or interpretations of. Thus atomic expressions, free from quantifiers, were seen as starting points for workable semantics purported to satisfy the demands of such a logical theory where the meanings of primitive terms could be understood extensionally as atomic constituents of meaning (“Building-Block Theory”). But immediately new elements of meaning emerge. For example, if we think that a symbol ‘p’ represents the sentence ‘It rains’, it does not seem completely satisfactory to say (as it would be syntactically speaking) that ‘p’ has the role of a reinterpretable sentence variable within the logical theory. In addition, we need some sort of clarification concerning how the interpretation of ‘p’, viz. ‘It rains’, is connected to what it represents, to a certain state of affairs in the world, *through its form of representation*. This immediately combines the form of presentation and the definition of truth for atomic expressions with the question of the logical form of ‘p’. That this combination is not without epistemological or metaphysical affinities has caused serious problems. These problems all pertain to a certain basic dilemma: what has to be taken into account *in logic* to confront the reality *epistemologically* or *metaphysically*?

Let us take an example: any singular object to be confronted in the empirical world can be said to imply an indefinite number of possible perceptual predications. In this sense all objects are indefinitely deep constructibles. Moreover, they are fluctuating and moving. This does not mean total chaos because there are invariances in the world, as well. The invariances are of two kinds: invariances as to *what* an object is and invariances *between* the objects. As to the former, what happens between the mind and the world (in an epistemological or metaphysical sense) is a certain *stagnation* producing what we call phenomena and physical objects; as to the latter, we have the invariances between them. It is this process of stagnation which has an impact on semantical relations, i.e., on symbol meaning. What in this stagnation⁸ is particularly metaphysical and epistemological, in contradistinction to semantical, is one important way to formulate the question in order to see the dilemma we are facing in symbol meaning. Another serious problem is: How much is the stagnation responsible for assuming semantical relations to be *constant*? How can *contextuality* be taken care of?

7 Not forgetting that all these logicians had *very different* backgrounds.

8 In Wittgenstein’s terms: “projection” and “logical form”.

In contemporary discussion the main fronts offering perspectives on dealing with the issue of symbol meaning are the following: the acceptance of logic as an *ideal formal language*, on the one hand, and adopting the perspective of *contextualism* or pragmatism, on the other. According to the former, the meaning of a primitive symbol is the conventional assignment of an external entity to that symbol (names are assigned objects, predicates are assigned properties or sets of objects, sentences are equal to their truth-conditions). According to the latter, reference and truth cannot be ascribed to expressions as detached from their actual use. From the point of view of this latter conception, the former is guilty of reducing meaning into a theory where meanings are non-contextually defined once and for all (literalism). From the point of view of the former, the latter is guilty of forgetting that there are always some general features⁹ combining different particular uses of language, thus creating an impact on meaning as the logical form in consequence. Both accusations are to some extent justified but not irreconcilable. The crimes of both can be removed. The bone of contention, in my view, concerns the possibilities we may have of taking properly into consideration contextual factors of determining meaning for a logical theory. The relevant debated options on this issue have been to deny the possibility of defining meaning in language (ineffability of semantics), to detach “use conditions” from semantical rules (speech-act theories), to rely on syntactical devices (pure formalism) and to develop meaning determinants as contextually embedded rules (game-theoretical semantics). In this article I will follow the path offered by the last option.

3. *Meaning Constituents, Compositionality and One World*

If there is no being without a property and no property without a being, as the maxim of nominalistic ontology claims, then ‘F(x)’ obviously is the most primary form with which to talk about beings. But ‘F(x)’ is the *form of predication*; it says that x is given through a certain property (predicate). Since predicates assimilate with concepts and concepts (intensions) determine extensions, concepts have an impact on the form of how the individuals that they are concepts of are treated in logic. Accordingly, we cannot deal with, e.g., a person being identical to someone else, without explicating clearly what the role of ‘x’ (subject) and ‘F’ (predicate) are in the form of predication. Moreover, we easily realise that it is not only the form of predication ‘F(x)’ as such which brings about semantic preoccupations, but even more, the *form of representing*. Everything included in this form cannot be rendered by ‘F(x)’, but perhaps by ‘f onto F(x)’—‘f’ standing for any of the representative functions.¹⁰ As a matter of fact, the

9 Consider e.g., ‘contrary to’, ‘alternative’ and other conceptual relations as “logicales” normally involved with concepts used in everyday speech.

10 We might say that it was this function Wittgenstein tried to clarify in his famous “picture” and “mirroring” theory.

form of representation is closely connected to the need of truth definition because this form presupposes that we can spell out in what circumstances the expression could be truthfully used. Thus, these two forms, 'F(x)' and 'f onto F(x)', do not exactly coincide because the latter implies truth conditions which cannot be directly discerned from some form of predication taken as an open formula. Understandably, by themselves alone and without the form of representation, terms remain free and mean nothing in the truth conditional sense. Representation is in this sense contextual. Consequently, not only do the beings we talk about reflect the form of predication and representation, but they normally do this in the context of quantification (binding variables).

Keeping in mind the traditional adhesion to metaphysics, it is easy to see how the efforts to cope with the demands of conceivability led to an important combination: For all expressions having the status of non-logical *constants*, semantical relations are based on *constant intensional factors (CIF)* (denoting, assigning); for non-logical *variables*, semantical relations are established by primitive non-logical constants *as the meaning constituents of variables (MCV)*. I will call the combination of *CIF* and *MCV* the *traditional tendency of rendering symbol meaning (TTRSM)*. Adopting *TTRSM* was one of the cornerstones of thought related to how our primitive terms of natural language enable us to identify the values of variables with adequate singular representations of the world.¹¹ Moving from open formulas with free variables to interpreted sentences with bound variables implies, according to *TTRSM*, such a "traffic" between language and the world that it has an impact on logical form. Thus, the transition in question involves ingredients in the forms of predication, representation and quantification. But to try to offer all these elements in one package has turned out to be extremely risky; either one forgets the generality while composing the logical form, thus restricting the scope of meaning, or the dynamism of language is forgot, thus rejecting contextual factors as meaning determinants.

The inclination to safeguard primitive semantical relations with constant arrangements needed another ally in order to build up the total theory of meaning. Efforts to reach this theory have yielded the adaptation of the combination of *TTRSM* and the following additional background principle: the *principle of compositionality (PC)*.¹² According to this principle, the semantic attributes (meaning) of a complex expression

11 Generality was involved only by taking conceivability (meaning) as based either on the identity between understanding (mind) and the world or on the homogeneity of all intellect in its relation to the world. Both of these two alternatives support the option of constancy in building up semantical relations. However, logical elements other than merely logical constants seemed to be involved already in the form of constituents and other primitive expressions. This has been widely discussed under the heading "materiality of logic" concerning the history of logic after Kant.

12 On different senses of compositionality see Hintikka & Sandu (2001) 49.

are a function of the semantic attributes of the constituent expressions. A sort of *enfant terrible* is now the *price* you have to pay for being able to apply the principle of compositionality so as to press all meaning elements into one package. The price results from the fact that you are bound to get into trouble with contextual truth conditions attached to primitive expressions. Admittedly, you cannot always have both contextuality and compositionality.¹³ Therefore, if you want to do justice to contextuality (which is inevitably present everywhere in natural language), you cannot have compositionality, except by driving an illicitly great amount of semantical and logical determinants into the symbol meaning and, at the same time, into the logical form of primitive expressions. This simply cannot be done with any syntactical devices, however sophisticated or “iconic” they may be. It is like killing a pet by feeding it all possible kinds of drugs in order to be prepared in advance for all possible kinds of diseases. Instead, there are other logical devices for taking care of contextual meaning. We only need to proceed from a totally different approach than that of *TTRSM* and *PC*. As Wittgenstein correctly saw, there is much more in the logical form than what can be read from the subject–predicate form; what is needed is the notion of a game. I will return to this shortly.

The principles *TTRSM* and *PC* have not been the only background factors at work in the development of the analysis of symbol meaning. Putting together *TTRSM* and *PC* entailed the dream that they can then rescue the semantics of symbol meaning. But a symbiosis of them both seems to collaborate in a still further general postulate: both in classical and modern discussions this wider presupposition has been the idea of *one world* as the universal domain for quantifiers. All semantics was supposed to reflect that domain. At the same time the idea of one world seemed to put quantification theory into a very eminent role, viz., into the role of serving as the universal tool for the analysis of meaning. However, can we even think that quantification theory itself is *the universal language* where anything can be expressed in an analysed and transparent form? Moreover, can this be done—as the logical empiricists believed—in accordance with a clear cut distinction between the pure “logical” (tautological, empty) part of language and the “non-logical” (content) part of language? If quantificational logic is meant to have the most valiant role in the analysis of problems of meaning in natural language, that is to say, in interpreted languages, does this task necessarily call for the acceptance of the combination of *PC* and *TTRSM* as pertaining to *one world*? The answer seems to be negative and, accordingly, the combination of *TTRSM* and *PC* is problematic or even rejectable.¹⁴

Thus the conclusion so far, concerning the systematic examination of the semantics of symbol meaning as well as a possible answer concerning the usefulness of *TTRSM*,

13 Since constituents sometimes contain free variables with no truth value, they do not result in proper propositions with a definite truth value.

14 For a critique of the combination, see Hintikka & Sandu (2001); Hintikka (1996b).

would be that a more viable approach than the one built on constant semantical relations is needed. In fact, instead of constant relations, semantics can be better built on dynamic, game-like or pragmatic “intensional factors”.¹⁵ Similarly, we have been recently told that there are serious difficulties in thinking that quantificational logic in its standard Frege–Russell form can offer a ready-made universal tool for the analysis of natural language. Rather, standard logic itself seems to be in need of improvement in order to do its job properly.¹⁶ If this is true, then there has to be a way of creating a workable basic logic other than traditional first order predicate calculus. Fortunately, it appears that this challenge can be met, if only we have success in properly applying certain new ideas concerning both *the game-like character of symbol meanings* and *the flexibility of quantifiers*. Accordingly, since a more detailed and involved machinery concerning logical form within first order logic can be achieved, it becomes possible to see the demarcation between logical and non-logical concepts in a more sophisticated way than before. *The impact of these new ideas on the semantics of religious language seems to be worthwhile as well.* This, in turn, helps to do justice to the legitimate traits pointing towards the autonomy view without advocating the illegitimate radicalism of fideism. Before we go to see the prospects arising from that new perspective, let us have a look at a historical example relevant to the semantics of religious as well as theological language.

4. *Knuuttila on the Shift of Predication*

In some of his many contributions to medieval philosophy, Academy Professor Knuuttila has clarified, for example, the rather complicated history and theological motivation concerning the shift of the concept of predication. Knuuttila’s contribution opens an illuminative perspective to the history of semantics in one of its most significant turning points: the transition from the inherence theory of predication to the identity theory of predication.¹⁷ What did this shift imply for the analysis of symbol meaning? It was the lot of Abelard (reinforced later by Scotus and Ockham) to realise the logical importance and role of the aforementioned second factor of meaning (extension).¹⁸ Due to

15 Recanati calls these factors “primary pragmatic processes”; see Recanati (2004) 23–38.

16 Not only do Gödel’s and Tarski’s results show this but also does the later reception of these results by logicians. See Hintikka (1996b).

17 Cf. Knuuttila (2003).

18 Correspondingly, our time has succeeded in shedding new light on the logical behaviour of the first factor (“intensional factors” in their entirety). For Plato and Aristotle conceivability or meaning was based on the view that reality as such was conceivable. For Scotus and Ockham there is no metaphysical guarantee of this. Instead, the world is conceivable because all intellects (including God’s) have the same logical structure. Frank Ramsey called the primary conceiving procedure “pro-sentence”, thinking that it could set up the connection

Abelard's findings, it first happened that the semantics of primitive predications *de re* was to become much more important than it was in the Aristotelian approach. In this sense the historical transition from inherence to identity had an immense influence on the semantics to come. Especially important for us is to focus on Ockham's logic because it greatly guided later developments. I will mainly follow Knuuttila's presentation and comment on that.

It is not news that the notion of substance is tricky.¹⁹ Some of the difficulties concerning this notion can be detected by taking up the phrases used to outline the rather vague images about substantial predication in the Aristotelian reception of logic.²⁰ Thus 'A is B' meant that the attribute B inheres in the substance A so that A exists by the way of having B. The Aristotelian heritage, however, produced a serious problem precisely from the point of view of symbol meaning: since all being is qualified (categorical) being, then the most simple linguistic unit, serving as an extensional interpretation of such a unit, is rendered by the form 'A is B' (e.g., 'Man is wise'). But then, according to inherence theory, any non-logical term, here 'A' and 'B', entails a considerable amount of intensional (conceptual) form by representing a qualified being. Therefore, 'A', for instance, is not only an individual member of a certain class but becomes, by denoting a certain general quality, an existing universal. The form of predication, then, becomes blurry from the point of view of first order logic. Consequently, if the formula 'A is B' is purported to represent something, it will imply that the form of representing, 'J', inevitably pertains to Platonic entities. For example, as Abelard pointed out, Socrates' wisdom, which exists or inheres in Socrates, will be treated as an extensional entity. This does not present any difficulties as long as one presupposes that reality is conceivable by participating in existing "ideas" (Plato) or taking the "forms" realised through the class-membership of individuals (Aristotle). However, this sort of logic is not any more and without qualifications a first order theory allowing quantification over individuals only. The principle, which was supposed to guarantee the logical correctness of the use of intensionally inflicted primitive terms for individuals, was the principle *dici de omni et nullo*. This principle says that if an attribute A is predicated of a subject B, then A is predicated of everything B is predicated. Since

to reality in the same sense as a "pro-noun", i.e., revealing its satisfactory truth conditions in a certain context. François Recanati (see Recanati 2004) and others (e.g., scholastics) have spoken about truth ascriptions to "what is said" by using terms like "enuntiations" or "propositionals" as having the status of transmitting between language and reality.

19 There is a certain familiarity between the twelfth-century discussions on the sameness of a substance without identity and, e.g., Putnam's elucidations about what and how many material objects there can be in a room. See Putnam (1988) 110–111. Similarly, we can describe an object as 'a statue' or 'a piece of bronze' being the same object but having different identities. See Rea (1998).

20 The inherence theory of predication goes back to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* V.

this principle guaranteed a complete distribution of middle terms, it was considered to compose the standard of the universal validity of syllogistic reasoning. Accordingly, the logical form for dealing with the symbol meaning of terms like 'A' or 'B' was saved by the principle of complete distribution. The scope of applying the principle fitted well with considerations of class membership but not very well with some cases where the identity of individuals was at stake.

The Aristotelian bias got a new turn in Abelard's logic.²¹ As Knuuttila points out, Abelard analysed predication by abandoning the inherence theory. His reasons were obvious: in order to render the correct form of predication we should not express it in terms of 'A is B' but precisely by using the forms of predication 'A(x)' and 'B(x)'. Abelard had a deep logical insight here: In order to grasp the logical form of 'something', we have to think that it is at least a conglomeration of two logical ingredients: the pointer of the predicate term, 'F', and the pointer of a logical subject, 'x'. Thus, metaphysically speaking, the simplest singular entities talked about in a language are combinations of properties and bearers of properties. It follows that there is, speaking in terms of nominalistic ontology, no being without a property and no property without a being. Hence, first order extensional logic has to start with the logical form of predication, rendered by 'F(x)'. This way of thinking led Abelard to say that a phrase such as 'A is B' should be analysed purely extensionally as 'that (x), which is A, is the same as that (x), which is B'.²² Here the logical role for x is clearly detected as making an identical predication possible on the basis of x being the same logical subject, the same individual being; this form was not explicit in inherence predication without the aid of the principle *dici de omni et nullo* for syllogistic reasoning.

Duns Scotus and William Ockham fundamentally adopted the Abelardian idea: the rudimentary semantical link between language and world is composed of a sort of "logical ostension" (performed by God), 'this' (*hoc*) pertaining on the logical role of x. There is actually an infinite number of possible "*hocs*", possible individual bearers of predicates, as free individual variables. This is despite whether we know anything about the properties (F) which an x may have. Therefore, conceiving the logical form does not, as such, imply any knowledge about the contingent actual world. This means that there are no *a priori* means to state F(x) even if our intellect always conceives

21 Of the discussions of sameness and identity in Abelard's time, see Rea (1998).

22 "It is queried ... how a sentence such as 'man is animal' or 'man is white' can be true ... for 'man' names a thing only insofar as it is man, and 'white' simply insofar as it is white ... The answer to this question is that the capability of the link verb or of all the sentence is not such as to maintain that man is white insofar as he is man, but the sentence says only that the same thing which is man is white (*idem quod est homo esse id quod album est*)."²² Abelard, *Logica Ingredientibus* 59, 25–60, 13 (according to Knuuttila).

everything in the form of $\Theta(x)$. Since some “*hoc*” could also be “pointed out” by us (who are acquainted with their *haecceitas*), then those are in principle suitable values of bound variables in our logical language. With this simple move two great things have happened: the core of the logical form of symbol meaning was removed from the actual world, logically fixed through “substantial forms”, to what holds for all intellects (to possible worlds); secondly, for bound variables it holds that they are dependent on a set of rules, not primarily or not only for classificatory purposes but clearly for correct reference to individuals. However, how much were the rules of referring intertwined with our cognitive faculties and how much are they independent of them? To this question Ockham’s standpoint entails one of the most mandatory answers.

5. *Knuuttila on Trinitarian Syllogisms in Ockham*

There is no need to discuss at length the aforementioned presentation of Knuuttila, simply to pay attention to some of the most interesting points. To start with, Ockham was inclined to approach logic in a remarkably different manner than Aristotle. In particular, two Ockhamian objectives made the difference: First, Ockham thought that the referential ties between language and the world should be set up by the rules of “personal supposition”. Secondly, he also thought that the status of a semantically primary language should be given to mental language. As Knuuttila puts it: “The logical structures of statements are expressed directly in mental language.”²³ How do these two Ockhamian objectives fit together?

As to the first, Ockham presented that in syllogistic logic the meanings of categorical terms, whether universal or singular, can be accurately dealt with only by mastering the rules by which we may in the end “descend” to individuals. Precisely these rules govern the variations of “personal supposition”; such rules are meant to preserve the invulnerability of the correct form of predication for individuals in different contexts. This links us to Ockham’s second idea: obviously, only in mental language (in the form of correct thinking) are the proper semantical ties to individuals, as the references of terms, correctly set up. But then a certain obscurity can be discerned: Mental language is in contrast to written or spoken natural language; these both are open to ambiguities, fallacies of the “figure of speech”. Since these fallacies concern failures in colloquial language, viz., the failures of a term to stand correctly for an individual, how can these failures be detected? Admittedly, by applying standards higher than what are available on the colloquial level. As to the question “What are these standards?” Ockham answers: the rules of personal supposition. It does not seem, however, completely clear whether the rules of personal supposition function as criteria for colloquial language *inside*

23 Cf. Knuuttila (2003) 132.

mental language. Anyway, a suspicion such as that brings to the fore the main concern: What is the relationship between the rules of personal supposition and the standards of mental language?

It seems that mental language has the status of the *analysans* and spoken/written language that of the *analysandum*. Therefore, something being a fallacy of “figure of speech” concerns the *analysandum*, but this fallacy can be shown to be a fallacy only by relying on the semantical ties of mental language (*analysans*). Consequently, mental language seems to serve as the criterion of the semantical correctness of colloquial language. Furthermore, violations of the semantical ties between terms and what they represent can be detected by the rules of personal supposition, but these rules themselves reflect the semantical settings of mental language. It seems to follow that even if Ockham’s logic is strictly extensional and nominalistic, its semantics is not exhausted by syllogistics.²⁴ Accordingly, a certain complexity concerning the logical form of symbol meaning seems to follow: the logical form of a primitive term (symbol), rendered as $\Theta(x)$, is supposed to satisfy the rules of personal supposition in different linguistic occasions. Furthermore, it is required that only “absolute terms” of mental language fulfill the cognitive demands of any primitive term, $F(x)$, *de re*. Thus, any subject–predicate construction is associated with a rule of personal supposition determining the truth of this construction on the basis of the meaning assigned to the subject term and to the predicate term. This seems to opt for an epistemic interpretation of symbol meaning. Since “absolute terms” satisfy this requirement, they are correct mental variables (sort of acquaintances based on “intuitive knowledge”). They seem to be examples *par excellence* of symbol meanings.

This complication of the interplay between the demands of personal supposition and the priority of an epistemic interpretation of mental language can be ascertained, if we take a closer look at Ockham’s view of the following Trinitarian syllogism.

- (1) Every Divine Essence is the Father.
- (2) Every Son is the Divine Essence.
- (3) Every Son is the Father.

24 Scholars are not at all unanimous about whether Ockham’s mental language was supposed to be ideal in all logical respects. See Panaccio (1999) 53–75; Knuuttila (2003) 132; see also Panaccio (1992) 91–106. In a private letter Panaccio adds that “Ockham’s mental language is simply not meant as a logically ideal language à la Frege. Many arguments can be adduced. For one thing, Ockham explicitly admits the possibility of referential ambiguities within mentalese (*Summa Logicae* III-4, 4, *OPh* I, 763), and he is also explicit that cases of material and simple supposition do occur in mental discourse (*SL* I, 64, *OPh* I, 197), which is indeed a possible source for ambiguities. ... Thinking of Ockham’s mental language as a logically ideal language has been, I believe, the great mistake of many recent Ockhamistic studies.”

In the standard predicate calculus, the logical form of the syllogism reduces to the transitivity of identity between singular variables:

- (i) $a = b$
- (ii) $b = c$
- (iii) $a = c$.

When it was now pointed out that (iii) is false on theological grounds, it is natural to think that premises (i) and (ii) are inflicted by such conditions that on account of them we can say that (i) is true in a model M but (ii) is not true in the same model M . This solution was rejected by Ockham. No valid rules of logic and personal supposition establish a counterexample to (i)-(iii). This means that there is no logical and semantical path with which to consider any qualifications on the model M , even when Trinitarian terms are at stake.

Ockham's strategy is to state that Trinitarian terms are not "formal" (logical) since they do not satisfy the requirements of syllogistic reasoning, especially the requirements of complete distribution. If, then, there is a violation of syllogistic form, it may depend either on the misuse of potentially syllogistic terms or on ignorance of syllogistic form. The fallacies of both kinds are logical by their nature, that is, what is by Ockham called the *fallacy of accident*. In this context the former, the misuse, is more important than the latter because it is connected to the *violation of the rules of personal supposition*. A misuse arises if the individual subjects are not only considered as numerically the same but also if they are taken to drop or change their predicates at some time in the syllogistic argument. According to Ockham, it may seem that the numerical sameness is presupposed in (i)–(3) but the requirement of the correct distribution of the predicates is not presupposed. However, in order to be "formal" in a syllogistic sense, it is not enough that the terms satisfy the underlying requirement of the numerical sameness. In addition, the identity, that is, the same predicates for x , also has to be satisfied. Since there is no way (no possible cognitive access to the proper meaning of 'Father', 'Son' and 'Divine Essence' as predicates) to establish this sort of description in the case of the Trinity, the symbol meaning of each term is not "formal", guaranteeing the identity. Having numerical sameness of the subject terms is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a valid syllogism; this means that the transition from any open formula to an interpreted one is blocked. Thus it seems that since the form of predication, $\Theta(x)$, is the form of a variable in use and the variable in use is tied to our cognitive faculties, the terms we acquire on the basis of fixing the identity of objects by the same predicates acquainted to us then these terms are the only acceptable terms for syllogistic purposes. Consequently, as Knuutila puts it, "If logic is the grammar of understandable mental language, as Ockham seems to think, the conception of God the Trinity is an *exceptional singularity* without any special logical rules pertaining to it"

(my italics).²⁵ If this is the correct reception of Ockham's view, then we simply cannot substitute Trinitarian terms for syllogistic variables, or for any "formal" variable, for that matter.

Some in the neighbourhood of Ockham tried to set up special semantic rules for Trinitarian terms so as to rescue their "logic" in the case of a problematic identity.²⁶ Even when this trial was on the right track there was a bigger problem involved than the scholastics perhaps realised: it makes a huge difference whether you try to proceed by relying on varying interpretation of God's attributes or by differentiating the domains of quantifiers of God-sentences. Let us see how it happens by looking again at the Trinitarian syllogism (1)–(3) that so troubled the medieval logicians.

What made this syllogism problematic and thus justified the worry of the scholastics? Normally, we would take (1) as pertaining to one variable 'x' ('Divine Essence' = G[od], 'Father' = F) and quantify accordingly by taking (1) as a transitive identity formula

$$(1') (\forall x) (x = G \supset x = F).$$

This way of starting will inevitably lead us into trouble. Therefore, some scholastics tried to think that, in (1'), there were somehow two tacit, as it were, intensional devices for entities ('God' and 'Father') that did not result in a strict identity of 'G' and 'F'. But this would lead to two "would-be" quantifiers ('every' ranging over God and 'every*' ranging over Father as somehow independent of each other). This was explicated by attempting to show how the variables as *relata* were counted as one thing (*essence*) but might differ in some proper property. The strictest demand for identity was that the *relata* were counted as one thing and they did not differ either in property or what is proper. This way of thinking would not have been possible without the Abelardian basic structure for a logical form of predication. But if so, then we should quantify, instead of over one, over two tacit variables pertaining to two tacit definitions or descriptions concerning the identity of the being at hand. Consequently, we face the problem of the interdependence of quantifiers.²⁷ What is even more important to realise is that here we meet the perils of symbol meaning: atomic expressions and quantification. Even when symbol meaning is taken for granted, in considering the interdependence of quantifiers, it is the behaviour of the latter which explains some confusions of the former.

25 See Knuuttila (2003) 132.

26 *Ibid.* 132–140.

27 In late medieval logical thinking it was generally thought, familiar to us, that '*omnis*' (any) was the circumlocution 'anything which is ...' See, e.g., Buridan, *Tractatus de consequentiis*, 59, 471, 2–472, 38. The famous contemporary problem of "quantifying in" is a slightly different problem since it does not occur on the first order level as it does in this Trinitarian example.

6. *IF-logic and GTS*

A basic logic of the Frege-Russell type first order predicate calculus is based on an interpretation of quantifiers and other logical constants such that the interdependence of quantifiers and constants is stable. This is done in a way that presupposes complete information regarding quantifiers and logical constants. A presupposition like this does not always accord with the demands of natural language. For that reason the dependence problem is a symptom of a restriction of the expressive power of basic logic. In order to improve the expressive power, we have to allow a certain amount of independence for quantifiers and, consequently, allow *imperfect information*²⁸ concerning them. Improving expressive power succeeds through game theoretical semantics (GTS).²⁹ If we now think that there are two “would-be variables” involved in (1’), then this premise should be formalised using explicitly two variables

$$(4) (\forall x)(\exists y) (S [x, y] \ \& \ [x = y]).^{30}$$

But now the problem concerns the relation expressed by ‘S [x, y]’ in (4). Clearly it is to be taken as some kind of indeterminacy where the mutual dependence of ‘x’ and ‘y’ is not yet fixed. In order to see this we only need to bring to the fore what we normally presuppose by expanding the sentence (1’) to (4), viz., that ‘F’ and ‘G’ denote the

28 To say that information is at stake might suggest some sort of intensionality to be present on the first order level. This might be the case, if we suggest some “individual moves to be hidden alongside with quantified variables” in the sense of GTS. I am indebted to Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen for this remark.

29 The semantics of an atomic sentence is explicated by the rule according to which one of the players of the game (the “verifier”) wins if the sentence is true, i.e., if it has a meaning in some model. In this case the other player (the “falsifier” = nature or any other “agent”) loses. If the sentence is false and does not have a meaning in the model, the “falsifier” wins and the “verifier” loses. Naturally in this atomic case it is presupposed that all the non-logical constants of the atomic sentence are interpreted in relation to some particular (actual or possible) world M. The meaning of the atomic sentence, then, is taken as a symbolic meaning. “But what matters are the rules of semantical games, and not the psyche, the epistemic state or the cognitive capacity of the players. The truth of a first order sentence in a given model is a *combinatorial* fact about this model. Whether this fact obtains or not is independent of whether any human being ... ever plays the relevant semantical games.” See Hintikka (1996b) 219 (my italics). Furthermore, it turns out that “by formulating a game rule that characterizes the meaning of the new [non-logical] constant” ... the conceptual behaviour of that non-logical constant is taken care of, thus ... “from the vantage point of GTS there is no difference between logical and nonlogical constants ...”, Hintikka (forthcoming).

30 These formulas are taken from Hintikka’s example formulas and assimilated to suit the present context. See Hintikka (1996b) 47–51. The brackets are used here as Hintikka uses them for syntactical purposes.

same individual, as (4) actually says: All x 's and some y , exemplified by the S -relation (sentence), are identical.

Again, according to the Frege-Russell tradition the scope of the universal quantifier $(\forall x)$ binds everything that comes after it in the formula. GTS starts differently. From the point of view of GTS it is obvious that the value given to y by the verifier, for instance b , depends on the information that the falsifier has first fixed on x . Consequently, y cannot have any other value than what falls on the values given to x . Hence, we see the root of the problem immediately, if we shift to IF-logic. This is because mutual dependencies of the quantifiers can be expressed in IF-logic, but cannot be expressed properly in Frege-Russell ordinary logic.³¹ Formula (4) is now removed by adding a slash mark, in order to bring into daylight the fact that the existential quantifier is independent of the universal quantifier. We then get the formalisation

$$(5) (\forall x)(\exists y/\forall x) (S [x, y] \ \& \ [x = y]),$$

which is demonstrably³² neither true nor false in a model, which has at least two elements. (5) can be further applied as

$$(5') (\forall x)(\exists y/\forall x) (x = G \supset y = F \ \& \ x = y),$$

which says that the value, b , given to y by the verifier does not depend on the information of what value is given to x by the falsifier. It holds, however, that (5) is weakly equivalent (i.e. true in the same models but not necessarily false in the same models) to the ordinary logic formula

$$(6) (\exists y)(\forall x) (S [x, y] \ \& \ [x = y]),$$

which is a first order sentence and must, therefore, either be true or be false in a model. This renders to (6) a peculiar status. Similarly (5') is equivalent to

$$(6') (\exists y)(\forall x) (x = G \supset y = F \ \& \ x = y),$$

which, in turn, is true in every model in which 'F' and 'G' denote the same individual, and false in every model (with at least two elements) in which 'F' and 'G' do not denote

31 Generally, there are logical structures having models which cannot be captured by ordinary first order logic.

32 This is shown by Hintikka & Sandu (2001) 49–61.

the same individual.³³ This being so means that (from the point of view of the verifier and falsifier) there exist models in which (6') is false but (5) does not have any truth value, i.e., (5) has a status similar to an open formula without a fixed truth value. On the other side, the only way to explain the peculiar status of (6) would be to have its predicates partially interpreted.

This is a tricky situation. Concerning quantifiers, the choice of *b* by the verifier could have happened independently of the choice of *x*, which makes a perfect sense in IF-logic. This, in turn, collaborates with the view that it is totally in vain to overload any symbol meaning by the semantical package of too much logical form, if you can, instead, do the same job by improved quantifiers. On the other hand, by leaving the predicates in God-sentences only partially interpreted we could achieve seemingly the same effect on the scholastic lines, however, renouncing now syllogistic reasoning, as Ockham correctly saw.

7. *Purview for Theological Paralogisms*

In the light of the exploration above we can come up with certain more general views. First of all, there is nothing mystical in the logical form of some theological sentences: for all cognitive purposes they may be without fixed truth value, which seems to correspond to their epistemic status perfectly well. This doesn't make them "fideistic" or non-standard because there is a perfectly clear counterpart situation of quantifiers. Secondly, there arises a far reaching and profound landscape in front of us: operating with partially interpreted God-predicates or allowing the quantifiers to be independent from each other in some typical theological contexts seem to become real options. Ockham rejected the former but didn't develop the latter. In my view, it is the latter which is the promising prospect. Furthermore, the latter is not without metaphysical and epistemological implications.

One of such an implication might be the following: *the identity of *x* and *y* is a different matter than the mutual quantificational dependence/independence of *x* and *y* (e.g., their numerical sameness)*. This point can be generalised because every realistic case of natural language involves more or less contextuality, allowing the rise of the dependence/independence relevant issue concerning quantifiers. Therefore, the suggestion of dependence/independence holding true for IF-logic also gives the true basis for the semantical analysis of Trinitarian syllogisms. The medieval logicians, however, tried to solve this problem, not by improving quantifiers but focusing on the logical form of symbol meaning (interpretation of variables). For this purpose they introduced the term *idem quod* in order to express that the extensions in question were defined and

33 I am partly indebted for the contents of (5), (5') and (6), (6') to Gabriel Sandu and Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen.

fixed “essentially” but not “personally”, termed as *idem qui*.³⁴ The game theoretical interpretation of quantifiers, in turn, gives an excellent opportunity to express the very idea that the domains of quantifiers pertaining to our natural capacities for choosing the domains can be, to some extent, independent of a final theological or metaphysical choice of the domain, i.e., independent of the identity pertaining to a statement of that kind. The most profound insights of the medieval logicians can thus be explained, not merely referring to predicates proper or nonproper in connection to the identity of God but referring to the game-like behaviour of quantifiers in connection to God-sentences. This game-like behaviour gives a profound insight into the semantics of the term ‘God’, if this term is supposed to make sense or relevance at all from the logical point of view.

Even when ‘God’ is often used in religious language as a name with a single extension (an individual), already the mildest and most modest theoretical (theological or metaphysical) use of that term seems to imply such contextuality that it blocks the extensional transparency. This seems to be the main reason for the difference between *using that term* and *explaining it* as mentioned.³⁵ Accordingly, in religious language the term ‘God’ is normally used extensionally as ‘he’, provided for with the attributes coming from the religious discourse. The problem begins if in a logical argument of some theoretical discourse ‘he’ becomes dependent on how ‘God’ was understood *earlier*, i.e., as possibly seen from another perspective, say from a religious feeling or experience. Anaphoric uses are cases in point. Referring by an extensional term ‘he’ does not always fit with ‘God’ as having even the mildest descriptive content for an object of thought. However, instead of harmonising the conflicting attributes, the case is more efficiently analysed by considering the possible dependence/independence of quantifiers.

Thus, it seems that there is really a big difference between whether the domains of quantifiers are independent or whether the predicates used are only partially interpreted. The latter hints at the fluctuation of identity (of God), the former to the logical behaviour of addressing (to God).

8. *A Telling-Off*

Let us try to grasp again the wider perspective of our present talk. It seems plausible that our views regarding the nature of philosophy of religion can profit from an assimilation of the points I have presented. This is perhaps seen if we put modern attempts concerning the rationality of theological statements into their proper context. In recent times—let us say after Kant—philosophers of religion have been forced to act almost

34 See Knuuttila (2003) 122–125.

35 Dalferth seems to have realised the profundity of this issue; see Dalferth (2003) 479–546.

solely as respondents. The discussion has centred around various enterprises aiming at an adequate epistemological or metaphysical argument that responds to the challenges emerging within mainstream philosophy, which, in turn, was formed by the challenges coming from science and technological culture. The phenomenon concerning philosophy of religion can be called clique-formation (a similar phenomenon has of course occurred in other areas as well, as for instance in the philosophy of art). A reasonable doubt would suggest that in accordance with the clique-formation, the reception of the notion of rationality has been exceedingly narrow or split, as I said in the introduction.

In this situation one might wonder what could make the occupations of philosophy of religion and those of mainstream philosophy more familiar to each other. The answer seems to be history and logic. However, in the camp of philosophers of religion the opportunity of bringing together, on the one hand, the historical background of semantic ideas and, on the other hand, the contributions of today's logical theories, has been mostly left unattended. There are some exceptions to the described predicament within analytic philosophy of religion, but only a few are based on an authentic philosophical interest, without any hidden edificatory or apologetic motives. Even rarer are the attempts to connect the problems of philosophy of religion and the philosophical questions of basic logic. Therefore, one could suggest that what is needed today is to realise that both *the relevant historical texts* and *the texts of today's logical avantgarde* deserve to be read together with keen eyes. Reading in this way implies a sort of specific methodology for philosophy of religion; it motivates finding the real philosophical contribution coming from both sources: *from history* and *from systematic analysis*. As a matter of fact, some relevant methodological points have been offered, for example, by Knuuttila's colleague and earlier supervisor Professor Jaakko Hintikka, as well as by Knuuttila himself. Let me here focus on just a few points.

Regarding historical research, it is illuminating to make a distinction between "horizontal" and "vertical" ingredients of meaning. The difference between these ingredients is that when the former consists of mapping the contextual historical network of a certain issue, the latter consists of opening the logical and conceptual *space* relevant to the issue. For the aims of historical reconstruction it is important to map all the "horizontal", that is, contextual links entailed by the issue in the texts. Into these "horizontal" ties belong the recognition of various "items" from whatever area (e.g., from theology or art) they may come. Within philosophical study, however, the exploration and scrutiny of these "items" should be only historical, not applying principles of any systematic or substantial theological ideas or hermeneutics in their ahistorical or superhistorical senses. Thus, a philosopher working as a historian should be acquainted with theological conceptions but not use them in any methodologically systematic, not to say hermeneutical, way in the field of philosophy. Accordingly, a philosopher who lacks sufficient historical knowledge on theological themes might easily become a victim of interpreting historical ideas relevant to theology and religion too directly on the basis

of his own philosophical expertise and even according to his own likings. This is apt to lead into narrow or anachronistic interpretations.

The coin just tossed has, however, another side as well. We might wonder what the aforementioned “vertical” ingredients might be in each case. The answer is simple: “vertical ties” are connections between language (thought) and the world. In this sense, obviously, they amount to semantical and conceptual (logical) determinants of meaning. Consequently, it turns out that there really is such a thing as a complementary systematic continuum of explaining certain historical ideas and reconstructing such ideas rationally. The intermediary stage between pure historicity and pure rational reconstruction purports to look for “ideas that can accurately reflect different thinkers’ outlooks”.³⁶ But we can move even further in this vertical continuum. Since history is always a development of certain answers which as such pertain to more or less the same questions or themes, it is natural to think that, for any themes, there is always a logical and semantical dimension offering the frames for dealing with the theme in question. These logical spaces might be somewhat hierarchically structured in the sense that on a higher level we come across more abstract questions, such as questions concerning logic and semantics themselves. This observation implies that what we are supposed to mean by a truly complementary systematic analysis of a certain idea, whether historical or not, always approaches the analysis of the semantical and representational (“vertical”) ties between expressions and what they speak about. In this sense, certain features of any idea are logical or semantical. Precisely this observation justifies my general outlook for philosophy of religion: it should be a logical and semantical analysis in the first place.

9. *Concluding Remarks*

Philosophical questions concerning the semantics of basic logic (quantification theory) are, in the first place, philosophical questions concerning first order issues. This means that they are questions concerning primarily all *descriptive purposes* of using language within the frames of nominalistic ontology. Therefore, insofar as there is any natural relevance for analysing first order issues within philosophy of religion, first order logical considerations are also relevant. Symbol meanings of religious or theological expressions can be analysed as linked with games implying idiosyncratic truth conditions within an extensional first order language. Instead of assigning all of the intensional factors

36 The outlooks in turn may reflect a basic idea which is not, however, a combination of a certain “unit idea” (Lovejoy), but rather such an idea moulded in the interaction with the environment. Such ideas can be “systematic” in the sense that they are examples of a certain wider conceptual presupposition involved in the thinker’s conceptions. See Hintikka (1981); Knuuttila (1999) and (2000).

(having an impact on truth conditions and therefore on meaning) into one monotonous form, more justice is done by paying attention to the real, and therefore more flexible, behaviour of quantifiers in the theological context.

However, not all theological issues are of first order, e.g., the famous principle of the Finnish Luther scholarship, “Christ is present in faith” is Platonistic or nominalistic depending on whether the logical subject phrase is ‘the presence of Christ’ or ‘Christ’. A certain Platonism is often inevitable in theological semantics. Accordingly, one of the benefits of IF-logic would be that it helps us to see how far we can go with the first order nominalistic approach and where the inevitable Platonism enters the picture. This means, among other things, that we can clarify the demarcation between logical and non-logical terms; many typical cases turn out to be uses of non-logical second order terms for first order logical purposes. This is rather interesting because it can be taken as a typical case of the “logic of faith”. On the other hand, even when there sometimes seems to be no clear demarcation at all, seeing this lack is due to our present improved logical tools. In a certain sense this implies coming closer to medieval thinking because in that tradition the collection of “syncategorematic” (logical) terms was wider than ours. Game Theoretical Semantics thus proves its vigour by shedding light on the twilight zone between logical and non-logical terms. Moreover, even when God-Talk may thus entail idiosyncratic logical traits, there is no hurry to rush directly into proposing autonomous non-standard logical forms for it. The reason is simply that IF-logic is able to deal with at least some crucial cases better than traditional syllogistics or the Frege-Russell type of first order logic.

There might be even reason to generalise a bit by saying that precisely anaphoric and indexical uses of ‘God’ in relation to descriptive uses are the main source of conceptual confusions in God-Talk. These confusions concern the logical form of primitive expressions of God-Talk. What, relevant to the form, has to be taken care of, is the task of the semantics of philosophy of religion. In this sense semantics and philosophical logic precede metaphysics and epistemology. This is because the primary task of semantics is to reveal what sorts of suggestions and connections are or can be linked with religious truth claims. Hopefully, the remarks presented here reveal that what philosophical semantics looks for as its primary material is the actual religious or theological talk with its actual surroundings rather than metaphysical or epistemological theories upon such talk. Having said this, it seems to me that, for example, theism as warrant frames for the meaning of religious expressions becomes rather futile. The same holds true for the extreme autonomy view of religious language.

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ILKKA NIINILUOTO
Cognition and Emotion

The distinction between cognition and emotion, or “the brain” and “the heart,” is deeply rooted in our folk psychology and popular culture. Many philosophical discussions have also taken for granted the assumption of the 19th-century school psychology that reason, will, and emotion are three separate faculties of the human mind.¹ When some analytic philosophers in the 1950s started to speak about the “intentionality” and “rationality” of emotions and passions, this sounded almost heretical. But the historians of philosophy can offer a corrective perspective: as Simo Knuuttila (2004) shows in detail, the close connection between cognition and emotion, even their identity, has been debated and advocated by the great philosophical tradition from the ancient and medieval thinkers to the present time.

In this paper, I adopt a double aspect account of cognition and emotion: they are in some ways present in all tokens of human mental life, as two features that can be formally distinguished from each other. Therefore, it is important to investigate their interrelations and interactions. While I argue against the identification of emotions with judgements or beliefs, the last section suggests a formalism for treating emotions in analogy with propositional attitudes.

The Contrast between Reason and Emotion

In many popular discussions, the cold steel of reason is contrasted with warm feelings—such as love, charity, pleasure, joy, and happiness. This opposition of dangerous cognition and comfortable emotion, with a positive emphasis on the latter, has been fostered by many religious thinkers: when Pascal in the 1650s exclaimed that “the heart has its reasons, which reason does not know,” he implied that God is “felt by the heart” (see Pascal 1978, 98). For the 19th century romantic poets, who devalued scientific reasoning, morality and art as the highest forms of human culture were based upon sentiments and imagination. The same contrast is continued today in the postmodernist revolt against discursive reason in favour of the free flow of human desires.

1 Systematic consideration of will and volitional acts is beyond the scope of this paper.

Hume argued in his *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739–1740) that all sensible creatures are slaves of their passions. A similar factual claim is made by the pleasure principle of Freud's psychoanalysis. This is also why the ancient and modern rationalists, from Aristotle and the Stoics to Descartes and Spinoza, feared uncontrollable passions that take over the domination of reason in our thinking and behaviour. The Stoic philosophers proposed a therapy of desire (Nussbaum 1984), with the goal that the wise man should get rid of emotions (*apatheia*).

Similar attitudes are also reflected in the classical terminology in many languages. Emotions (from the Latin verb *emovere*) are something that move us. Affects (from the Latin verb *afficere*) as things that happen to us, as ways of being acted upon, can be expressed by participles (like “amused,” “amazed,” “delighted,” “terrified,” “surprised,” “upset,” “worried”) (see Gordon 1999). Passions (from the Greek term *pathos* = disease and the Latin verb *pati* = to suffer) are passive mental states, in contrast to such future-oriented active states (from Latin *actio*) like intentions, action plans, and expectations.

The 19th-century school psychology confirmed the traditional distinction by postulating reason, will, and emotion as the three independent faculties of the human mind. This standard view was influenced by Kant's *Anthropologie*, published in 1798.

In spite of the tendency to divorce cognition and emotion in philosophical doctrines, they are closely linked in many natural languages. In Finnish, philosophers introduced the term “mielenliikutus” (literally, movement of the mind), but the traditional term “tunne” is derived from the verb “tuntea,” which may refer to bodily sensations (“tuntoaisti” = the sense of touch), sensations of the inner state of the organism (“kivuntunne” = pain), general consciousness (“omatunto” = conscience), and knowing by acquaintance (“tuntea” = to feel, to know something, “tunnistaa” = to recognize, “tuttu” = familiar, known). Similar meanings can be found in the Latin terms *sentire*, *sensum*, and *sentimentum*, German terms *fühlen* and *Fühlung*, Swedish terms *känna* and *känsla*, and the English terms *feel* and *feeling*.

The connection between feelings and sense perception has inspired some attempted classifications of emotions. Thiodolf Rein, who wrote the first textbook of psychology in Finnish in 1884, started from Kant's anthropology by distinguishing cognition, will, and emotion, but added immediately that they appear in reality only in connection with each other. Emotion is our ability to enjoy or suffer from what we mentally conceive. Rein distinguished bodily or sensuous emotions (like pain and pleasure) from non-bodily or non-sensuous emotions. The latter he divided by their quality, endurance, and strength into proper emotions (e.g., hope, fear, shame, envy, love, sympathy, beauty, surprise, certainty, remorse, piety), feelings or moods (joy, melancholy, sadness) and affects (e.g., being frightened or angry).

In the early analytic philosophy, the sharp dichotomy between reason and emotion was presupposed in many discussions, among them the distinction between the cognitive and emotive meanings of linguistic expression (Ogden and Richards 1923)

and the emotivist theories of art (Langer 1942) and ethics (Ayer 1936). When some analytic philosophers started to speak about the intentionality of emotions (Broad 1954; Kenny 1963), the logic of emotions (Solomon 1977, 1980), and the rationality of emotions (Rorty 1980; de Sousa 1987), a new research programme about the relations of cognition and emotion was initiated. It was soon realized that the phenomenological tradition from Brentano and Husserl to Scheler and Sartre had intensively analysed the cognitive and emotional aspects of mental acts (Green 1992). Scholars of ancient philosophy pointed out that the Stoic theory in a radical manner identified emotions with a class of false judgements (Nussbaum 1984; Knuuttila 2004).

An important way of overcoming the binary dichotomy of “rational temperance” and “irrational wantonness” was proposed already by Plato in *Phaedrus* (238a): desires are divided into bad and good (253d). The same view is developed in the *Republic*, where the soul is divided into three parts: the rational, the appetitive, and the principle of high spirit (*thumos*) (439d–e). High spirit as the third part of the soul is “the helper of reason by nature unless it is corrupted by evil nurture.” The Finnish philosopher and psychologist Eino Kaila (1943) interpreted Plato’s doctrine as the thesis that in maintaining the leading role of reason in our behaviour we need not, and should not, renounce our emotions: by the help of *thumos*—even in our highest aspirations in science, art, and religion—the passions correlated with our most basic “animal” needs are vitally important for us as the source of our mental powers and energy.

Today philosophers argue that emotions do not constitute a “natural class” (Rorty 1980), but rather only phenomena with “family resemblance” (Alston 1969). Ontologically, there is no simple agreement about the “location” of emotions, since they always seem to involve both our body and mind.² Methodologically, the safest approach is to treat emotions as involving several levels or dimensions.³ Neurophysiology, psychology and cognitive science help to understand emotions as complex states of our mental life which involve bodily reactions, behavioural dispositions (Ryle 1949), cognitive processes, and culturally determined social constructions (Averill 1980). Then it is also appropriate to analyse emotions—together with cognitions and volitions—as aspects of all of our mental acts.

2 The mind-body problem cannot be discussed in this paper. My own position supports emergent materialism (cf. Niiniluoto 1999). Emotions are grounded in the depth of our limbic nervous system, but their complex self-reflective structure may place them in the highest emergent levels of our mental life.

3 For Aristotle’s similar view, see Knuuttila (2004).

Knowledge about Emotions

How do we obtain knowledge about emotions? On what conditions can emotions be objects of our knowledge? An external observer can infer the existence of emotional states in other persons by their behaviour. Darwin wrote a whole book on the expression of emotions in animals by their faces and gestures. Even though these expressions may differ in various cultures, there are external criteria for such mental states as joy, pain, and anger (Wittgenstein 1953). Still, such interpretations in all particular cases are fallible.

For the behaviourist, the only access to emotions is by external observation. This view ignores the fact that as self-conscious beings we are also able to experience our own mental states “from inside.” Emotions are distinguished from each other by their qualitative features. They are “qualia” associated with peculiar feelings. However, contrary to the Cartesian assumption, our mind is not completely self-transparent: even though introspection is possible, it is always limited and fallible—just like our other modes of knowledge (cf. Niiniluoto 1999).

A famous example of a mistaken sensuous emotion is pain in an amputated leg. We may also be in error about the quality of an emotion: my open hate may in fact be hidden love. This is typical in situations discussed by psychoanalysis, where emotions are suppressed from consciousness and the manifest behaviour conceals their true quality.

The fallibilist view of introspection is also supported by the fact that it is possible to learn to cognize our emotions. Training in sensuous discrimination (e.g., wine tasting) can lead to remarkable expertise. In moral education it is important to teach role taking, empathy, and the feeling of “right” emotions—Scruton (1980) calls this “knowing what to feel.” One of the tasks of art and literature is to teach us what joy, love, grief, and other human emotions are—and thereby to help us to identify their presence in ourselves.

Emotional Knowledge

Emotions and affects are often thought to be obstacles to knowledge. I may have sentimental reasons for hoping that p, if the truth of p would bring me pleasure. Such an emotional commitment may lead to wishful thinking, vanity, and self-deception (de Sousa 1980). It may also explain our prejudice or tenacity in keeping our old beliefs in spite of contrary evidence.

However, emotions need not be *irrational* in the sense that they are opposed to reason. Emotions serve as powerful motives for knowledge-seeking. Knowledge itself may be the object of an emotion: a scientist is fascinated by new ideas and theories, loves truth for its own sake, and is “hungry” and “thirsty” for new knowledge. Our

firmest convictions are usually backed up by strongly felt emotions: "Deep in my heart I do believe ..." Attempts to find new knowledge by inquiry are related to *epistemic and doxastic emotions*: surprise, astonishment, doubt, hesitation, uncertainty, certainty, and belief.

Emotivist theories of ethics suggest that moral judgements are nothing but expressions of emotions (see Ayer 1936): "Killing is morally wrong" is not cognitively meaningful, as it is equivalent to the disapproving exclamation "Killing, booh!" Philosophers have been sober enough not to propose emotivist theories of cognition, where "I know that p" is equivalent to the approving exclamation "p, oh yeah!" But still it would be interesting to study systematically the linguistic expressions that can be used to express epistemic and doxastic emotions: "Oh!," "Yes?," "Aha!," "Gee!," "No!."

Sometimes emotions give a direct contribution to our knowledge. Sensations about the state of my own body (pain, pleasure), the sense of touch (e.g., feeling the softness of a skin or the coldness of a metal), and empathy (the re-enactment of the thoughts and emotions of another person) are fallible sources of knowledge. Yet, one should warn that instinctive claims of the form "I feel that p" are usually epistemically weak, as they may lack critical assessment of the potential evidential grounds for p.

The theory of evolution gives also some justification for the cognitive merits of emotions. From this perspective, the function of emotions is to prepare human beings to meaningful behaviour and to maintain mental equilibrium by self-regulation. Thus, joy is a sign of our success in reaching our goals, sadness and depression are signs of our failures. Things that threaten our health (e.g., burning fire) cause us pain, while good things (e.g., satisfaction of thirst, sexual pleasure) are beneficial to the individual and the species. In this sense, typically, pleasant things *are* good for us, and painful things *are* bad for us. Again, such inferences are fallible, since individual emotional patterns may have developed in perverse ways (e.g., violence and pain as sources of pleasure).

Intentionality and Rationality of Emotions

So far we have discussed the dynamic interrelations of cognition and emotion, considered as two separate features of our mental life. The next step is to ask whether cognitive states can be parts or constituents of emotions.

For Brentano and Husserl, the defining characteristic of mental acts is their intentionality, directedness towards some object. When I love, I love somebody or something. This intentional object (my loved one) is constituted by my mental acts of perception, admiration, sympathy, wishes and expectations. It may have real existence in the objective world, as a person or a fact, but it may be just a figment of my imagination.

For some emotions it is difficult to identify such an intentional object. Moods, like melancholy and anxiety, express our general feelings, not attitudes towards specific objects. One solution of phenomenology is to exclude such moods from the domain

of proper emotions. For example, Solomon (1980) argues against Kenny (1963) that feelings are not intentional. Alternatively, it can be suggested that in anxiety we are fearing fear itself, or anxiety might be construed as fear with the whole world as its object. In his study in 1939, Sartre regarded “emotional consciousness” as a certain way of apprehending the world: while some emotions may be only pretended, “true emotions” are accompanied by beliefs about the world. Hence, the world of emotion has to be distinguished from the worlds of dreams and madness (Sartre 1948, 52, 73). Inspired by Sartre, Solomon (1977) suggests that emotions are judgements with their own “logic.”

Perhaps the most outspoken rejection of the intentionality of emotions was given by Hume. He argued that passions differ from beliefs and other cognitive states by their lack of any “representative quality”:

A passion is an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification. When I am angry, I am actually possess'd with the passion, and in that emotion have no more a reference to any other object, than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five foot high. 'Tis impossible, therefore, that this passion can be oppos'd by, or be contradictory to truth and reason; since this contradiction consists in the disagreement of ideas, consider'd as copies, with those objects, which they represent. (David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1969, 462.)

Hume's position would exclude all attempts to analyse the cognitive content and logic of emotions.

Against Hume, one can point out that most emotions involve beliefs and cognition. For example, if I am angry at *x*, I believe that *x* has done something against my interests or wishes. If I fear *x* (I am afraid of *x*), I believe that *x* threatens me or *x* is dangerous to me. Husserl argues that joy and sorrow over a fact *F* are compounded with the “affirmation” of *F*, while hope and fear over *F* do not involve the affirmation of *F* (Husserl 1970, 648). Affirmation or belief may also have degrees of certainty and uncertainty. Green's (1992) belief-desire theory employs this idea with its attempt to define basic emotions in cognitive and volitional terms:

- b joys that *p* = b believes certainly that *p* and b wants that *p*.
- b grieves that *p* = b believes certainly that *p* and b wants that non-*p*.
- b hopes that *p* = b believes without certainty that *p* and b wants that *p*.
- b fears that *p* = b believes without certainty that *p* and b wants that non-*p*.

Here belief without certainty might be replaced by belief that *p* is possible. Conversely, volitions might be defined in terms of beliefs, pleasure, and pain:

b wants that $p = b$ believes that p would bring pleasure to her.
 b wants that $\text{non-}p = b$ believes that p would bring pain to her.

With these amendments, Green's account would correspond to the traditional view that other complex emotions can be reduced to the basic emotions of pleasure and pain.

C.D. Broad (1954) suggested that emotions can be analysed into cognitive and affective elements. For example,

to be fearing $x =$ to be cognizing x fearingly
 to be admiring $x =$ to be cognizing x admiringly.

Here cognizing is an epistemic aspect that can be associated with questions about truth and falsity (e.g., whether the object x exists, what properties x has). The adverbs "fearingly" and "admiringly" express the affective element which—instead of being true or false—may be appropriate. So for Broad my fearing relation to x is appropriate or fitting, if x threatens me.

De Sousa (1980, 1987) extends this analysis by suggesting that appropriateness is also related to knowledge and rationality: Is the threat by x warranted by evidence? Is the fear of x useful or instrumental with respect to the goals of the agent? If we proceed along these lines, then the appropriateness or rationality of some emotions could be related to the agent's intrinsic values as well. Then e.g. loving the Supreme Being might be value rational for an agent even though this emotion does not have an existent object.

Emotions and Judgements

In Broad's analysis, emotions are cognitions with epistemic and affective aspects. If the affective aspect is eliminated, so that emotions are identified with some sort of judgements, a purely cognitivist account of emotions is obtained.

The Stoics combined the view that passions are disturbances which the wise man avoids with the thesis that passions are in fact false judgements. According to Chrysippus, an emotion involves the mistaken belief that some present or future thing, which in fact is indifferent to our virtue and happiness, is good or bad, and it is also associated with an excessive and uncontrolled disposition to act upon such a false belief. In Seneca's more sophisticated account, apprehension and assent are distinguished: when someone acts against my wishes, first the judgement (apprehension) that I have been offended is non-voluntarily formed in my mind; then I voluntarily accept the belief that I have been offended. This belief or assent is identical with my anger (see Knuutila 2004).

A peculiarity of the Stoic view is the thesis that emotional judgements are always false. In a world of friends and foes, our joys, hopes, fears, and angers may be appropriate—related to true beliefs about the object of emotions and its influences upon us. Solomon's (1980) proposal for the identification of emotions and judgements does not include the questionable falsity assumption. He argues that my anger at John for taking my car presupposes my judgement that John has stolen my car, and my anger is identical with my moral judgement that John has wronged me.

It is hard to see how this account could be generalized to all emotions: hope, anger, and shame may involve moral approval and disapproval, but joy, fear, worry, surprise, and pain need not. It is not enough to identify an emotion with a cognitive attitude. Solomon's treatment lacks the qualitative aspect of emotional states.

Greenspan (1980) argues against Solomon that there can be contrary emotions with the same object in a basically rational person. For example, I can be happy and unhappy that my friend was elected as the chairperson of the department instead of me. Even though this is correct, it is hardly conclusive: I can consistently accept at the same time the judgements that the appointment of my friend was right in some respect and wrong in another respect.

More problematic for the identity theory is the fact that the same emotion may be associated with several different judgements. For example, pain in my foot can be linked with statements like "Aah!", "Oh, what a terrible pain!", "Something hurts me," "What is it that hurts my foot?," "Something is sticking my foot," "I guess I have stepped on a nail," "Somebody has left a nail in the floor." Which of the various apprehended and asserted propositions about this situation would be identical with my pain? Similar examples can be repeated in the case of non-sensuous emotions.

Rorty (1980) points out quite convincingly that often changes in emotions do not appropriately follow changes of belief. Such a tenacity may be a sign of the irrationality of an emotion, but its existence disproves the identification of emotions with judgements.

The independence of emotions and judgements can be illustrated also by the following examples. Sometimes an emotion temporally precedes a judgment (I feel pain, and afterwards realize that I have stepped on a nail), and sometimes a judgement precedes an emotion (I know in advance that the dentist's operation will hurt my teeth). It is possible that a judgement occurs without an emotion (my anger at John fades away, even though I still believe that he stole my car), and an emotion may occur without any judgement (I wake up at night without any idea about what has frightened me).

Emotions and Propositional Attitudes

Even though emotions cannot be identified with judgements and beliefs, it is useful to compare their structure to propositional attitudes. The application of Hintikka's intensional logic helps us to understand the intentionality of emotions.⁴

Our cognitive actions, or thinking in general, can be described on several levels. Such descriptions may allow subliminal perceptions, dispositional beliefs, and tacit knowledge. But what might be called explicit cognition—the level analysed by logicians— involves concepts, propositions, judgements, and inferences. A factual proposition p classifies states of affairs into those that are compatible or incompatible with p ; proposition p (or a sentence expressing p in an interpreted language) is actually true if and only if the state of the actual world fits or agrees with p (see Niiniluoto 1999). A modal proposition Np (it is necessary that p) is true if p holds in all those possible worlds that are relevant alternatives to the actual world.

The main idea of Hintikka's (1969) theory of propositional attitudes is to treat knowledge, belief, and perception as involving modal statements. To specify a cognitive state of a person b , we need to specify the information that b has, and this can be achieved by referring to the class of possible worlds where this information is true. For example, a sentence of the form $S_b p$ (b sees that p) is true if and only if p is true in all the relevant alternatives, i.e., in all the possible worlds that are compatible with what b sees. Here S_b is understood in the weak sense (appears, seems to see), which does assume the success condition $S_b p \rightarrow p$. The intentionality of perception means that the propositional *seeing that* -operator S_b is taken to be basic, and the direct object construction "b sees c" is defined by S_b and quantifiers.

Hintikka employs two kinds of quantifiers, one based upon physical and the other perspectival cross-identification of individuals in possible worlds. The latter identifies individuals that play the same role from the viewpoint of b (e.g., the person on the left in my visual field). Let \exists be the perspectival existential quantifier. Then $(\exists x)S_b A(x)$ is true in world w if there is a function (world-line) f relative to b such that f picks out an individual $f(w')$ from each relevant alternative w' of w and each $f(w')$ satisfies $A(x)$ at w' . Then the following formulas

- (1) $(\exists x)S_b(x = c)$
- (2) $(\exists x)(x = c \ \& \ S_b(\exists y)(y = x))$
- (3) $(\exists x)(x = c \ \& \ S_b A(x))$

correspond to important types of perceptual statements:

4 The idea has been suggested also by Esa Saarinen in an unpublished paper.

- (4) b sees c; b seems to see c
- (5) b sees c; b looks at c
- (6) b sees c as an A.

Here (1) states that *c* appears in *b*'s perception, but this may be a case of a visual illusion or hallucination. In (2) and (3), the world-line picks out *c* in the actual world, so that they presuppose the actual existence of *c*. Formula (2) guarantees that *b* sees *c* as existing, but nothing else about the identification of *c* by *b*. Formula (3) states that *b* sees *c* as an *A* (cf. Wittgenstein 1953); this identification may be either veridical or illusory (see Niiniluoto 1982).

If S_b is replaced the *imagination* operator I_b (*b* imagines that), the formulas corresponding to (1) and (2) show how imagination may be directed toward individuals in two radically different ways: *b* imagines *c*, so that *c* appears in the imaginary worlds created by *b*'s mind, or *b* is imagining something about a real individual *c* (see Niiniluoto 1985).

In the perceptual context, a perspectival world-line is extended to the actual world through causality (Hintikka 1969). Thus, in formula (2) the perceived object *c* has to be causally responsible for *b*'s perception. But the situation is different in the context of imagination: the object of imagination need not be causally related to *b*'s imagination.

The logic of tactile sensation, i.e., touching and feeling, can be constructed as a special case of the logic of perception. The basic propositional operator is $F_b p$ (*b* feels that *p*), and direct object statements "b feels *c*" can be formulated by

- (7) $(\exists x)(x = c \ \& \ F_b (\exists y)(y = x))$.

If *c* is a physical object or body, a natural reading for (7) is "b touches *c*." On the other hand, statements where the object is an immediately felt quality (e.g., "I feel pain in my leg") have the form

- (8) $(\exists x)F_b (x \text{ is pain in } b\text{'s leg})$.

Similar interplay between emotion operators and quantifiers explains how emotions can be directed towards objects in different ways. Most accounts of the intentionality of emotions (see e.g. Broad 1954) are ambiguous in this respect. The outline below applies to all emotions that presuppose informational content, and it is open to different possibilities about the structural relations of the emotion and cognitive attitudes like knowledge, belief, thinking, memory, and imagination. Let E_b be a propositional emotion operator without a success condition (fear, hope, joy, hate, love, etc.). Then sentences of the form

(9) $(\exists x)(x = c \ \& \ E_b (\exists y)(y = x))$,

where c occurs in a referentially transparent position, express that c is the real *object* of b 's emotion. (9) resembles imagination statements rather than perception statements. Hence, as (9) does not presuppose a causal chain from c to b 's emotional state, c need not be the *cause* of b 's emotion (cf. de Sousa 1987). For example, b may hate or fear another person c , as she has obtained false allusions from another source about c 's actions or attitudes.

An emotion E_b may be directed also to non-existing objects and events. This is allowed by sentences where the term c occurs in a referentially opaque position:

(10) $(\exists x) E_b (x = c)$.

For example, a child can fear a fictive object like Santa Claus. The cases, where a person fears the Third World War or hopes to become a mother in the future, are slightly more complex, but can be formalized by using variables ranging over time points and events (cf. Niiniluoto 1982).

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